

A Policy Briefing Template

Title

It is important to keep this title short, snappy and informative. It is an important way of grabbing the reader's attention and an opportunity for you to start to communicate your message. Do not just copy and paste an academic title.

E.g. "An equal chance for local self-government"

Executive Summary

This should be around 2 to 3 sentences (absolute max of two paragraphs) in which you really sum up the whole brief. Emphasize the relevance of the research on current policy. State the core findings and recommendations that you will discuss in the paper.

Tip: This may be the only section that some readers read so make it punchy!

Introduction/Summary

Explain the relevance of the policy issue and why it is particularly important. You should also put the research into a broader context here. This could be a good place to include the rationale for action on the problem – why should they do something different?

Tip: Remember that your reader may know very little about your policy area so what are the important things they need to know in order to understand the rest of your briefing?

Methods and Approaches

Keep this section relatively brief as this is not an academic paper. Just explain how the results were found. A policy actor will want to see robust results and part of this is understanding where the results came from.

Results and Body

This is one of the main sections of the brief. You need to present your findings in an accessible way for a non-specialist. This may not just focus on your own research but may also include a synthesis of existing research that supports your recommendations.

Conclusions

What do your results show. This is a chance to reinforce the key message to be taken away from your policy brief. Do NOT just repeat your executive summary here, space is limited so make the most of it!

Policy Recommendations

There are two main ways to focus on this section. You need to decide if the purpose of the brief is to discuss new policy options or push forward 1-3 clear recommendations. If you are making more than one recommendation, differentiate them clearly e.g. through the use of bullet points.

Put forward a feasible set of recommended steps for how you can deliver the policy recommendation.

Tip: Include the specific set of actions that need to be taken in order to implement your recommendation but don't forget to include a short paragraph/sentence reiterating the importance of this recommendation. – throughout your brief you are trying to persuade!

References and Suggested Sources

This is your chance to show the credibility of your research. Use references sparingly as this is a short document but also include a few further sources at the end to give more background or detail on the issue. You may also include a link to the original research here in case the reader wants further information.

Tip: Here you are trying to show the credibility of your organisation and the argument you are putting forward so be sure to use well established sources. This is not a Wikipedia job!!

Acknowledgments

Include the author details and disclaimers and detail any funding used for the research. You should also note the researcher's position and contact details.

Tip: On a practical note the inclusion of contact details here provides a chance for stakeholders to discuss your policies further.