Simple form field

Centre align all form fields. Use a different style of text for the label versus support text. The further help field sits on the right hand side of the input. The label should follow sentence case; that is, upper case first word, then lower case second word.

Field label

Select boxes where possible default to a value. If this is not possible default to date text, slightly grey in colour saying "Please select/"

Field label

Optional fields

Users do not always understand the mandatory field marker (*) and on long pages the explanation can be lost. Where possible mark optional fields.

Field label

Support text

Support text should be used to give key information that is essential to complete the form field. Examples include password format and explanations for date of birth

National insurance number

Help text

Help text should be used to offer advice on a complex question. Where possible it should offer example answers and the format of that answer.

Field label

Date fields

For date of birth fields do not include a calendar lookup. Always use select boxes to minimise errors.

Date of birth

With standard date fields launch the calendar on focus on any of the form fields.

Date

Adding select boxes for month and year adds look-up and a Season Today hits resurface the calendar. Use a highlight colour to indicate Public Holidays if needed.

UK calendars begin on a Monday (many of the off-the-shelf UK calendars are American where calendars begin on a Sunday, the jQuery calendar offers it as a setting).

No-nos

- Do not place form fields side by side in columns. Users often do not see the form fields in the right columns.
- Only use 1 field for telephone numbers (i.e. no area code box) as many users will try and put the full number in the area code box.
- Avoid long, complex text based explanations at the top of forms - nobody ever reads them.

If the user cannot see their address offer a link. On click this will display the manual address entry fields.

Buttons

Where possible there should be 2 kinds of button on the page.
- Support buttons such as postcode look-up, refresh, back etc.
- Primary button. These should be the only one of these if it is to be larger and with a different design. Primary button should include chevrons.

Having only 1 primary button clearly indicates to the user the most important action on the page. If more than 1 primary button is needed consider splitting form over 2 pages.

Where possible add a description to the primary button to indicate what the next screen will contain.

The final payment button should include a tick and some explanation text to give confidence to the user to click.

Inline validation

Where possible all form fields should validate following curent focus leaving that field.

1. Default state

2. Completed successfully

3. Completed unsuccessfully

Where possible indicate why the form content is not correct. Do not use words such as error, problem or issue. Be positive.

4. Offering alternatives

Username

The username is taken.

Consider:

- johnsmith03
- Johnsmith
- Johnsmith1092

Please select an @ symbol

Password

Password strength

Entering currency values

Users enter currencies and monetary values into forms in a different ways. Where possible the system should accept the following options:

- £
- $
- €
- ¥

Adding more than 1 email/phone

Many users, especially those under 25, may not have a landline number or indeed consider this their main phone number. Where possible all form fields side by side in columns.

Email

Default state

On click

Results

Support buttons such as postcode look-up, refresh, back etc.

Page level error handling

There may be situations where errors can only be managed at the form submit level. Offer a direct link to each error (do a maximum of three). Clicking on the ‘Next’ link will show the full list of ‘hidden’ errors. Linking to errors in this way offers greater accessibility to users of screen readers.

Password strength

Where possible use plain text rather than images to aid accessibility.

About you

Contact details

Email address

Primary phone number

Your address

House name/number

Postcode

Look up address

Date of birth

Marital status

Mobile phone number

Contact telephone number

Password

Password strength

Options for feedback on password strength:

Weak

OK

Strong