

Scottish Information Commissioner
Operational Plan 2013/14



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Introduction

This document is the Scottish Information Commissioner's operational plan for 2013/14. The plan explains how resources will be used to realise the Commissioner's strategic vision and aims, and provides a tool for on-going monitoring of outcomes and management of resources.

Vision

The Scottish Information Commissioner aims to regulate fairly and add value to a Scotland:

- where people are familiar with their rights to access information and exercise them knowledgeably, effectively and responsibly;
- where those bodies delivering public functions disseminate and disclose information willingly and openly;
- where access to information is the result of open dialogue and communication that enables both the exercise of rights to information and the delivery of statutory functions; and
- which is recognised and respected internationally as a world-leader in access to information law, policy and practice.

Strategic aims

1. We will enable and support Scottish public authorities to develop and maintain high standards of FOI policy and practice through a combination of regulation, advice and assistance, and appropriate collaboration.
2. We will influence positively cultural change in Scottish public authorities' approaches to meeting their FOI duties.
3. We will encourage effective and responsible use of FOI rights through support, education and promotion.
4. We will influence and support the development of Scottish information law and policy to ensure it remains fit for purpose and enables effective communication.
5. We will be recognised as an organisation of accessible experts, that is run efficiently, governed effectively and leads by example.

Structure of the operational plan

The plan is laid out as a programme of actions listed under types of operational activity, with cross references to which strategic aim(s) it supports, and how output will be measured and monitored. The actions listed are a mixture of ‘business as usual’ and one-off projects. The aim is to make this a working document which forms the basis of on-going monitoring and assessment.

In general, business as usual will be managed and monitored in line with set targets, performance indicators, established reporting structures and approved policy.

Project-based work will be managed according to sound project management principles and practice. Each project will be initiated by the Senior Management Team and managed according to the structure in figure 1: Programme Structure.

Monitoring and Reporting

The plan will be reviewed and updated quarterly, and published on the Commissioner’s website.

The Commissioner’s annual report will provide a narrative of achievements and progress against plan.



Figure 1: Programme Structure

Key Performance Indicators for 2013/14

The Scottish Information Commissioner is required to report periodically on a range of activities. These include, for example, reporting; specific types of expenditure, periodic workforce trends data, publishing annual accounts and publishing an annual report. Information related to Governance is published routinely through the Commissioner’s Publication Scheme and is not listed in detail in this plan.



Specifically the Commissioner is required under section 46(2) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to report on the number of valid applications not investigated and decided within four months of receipt.

This requirement forms the basis of the Commissioner’s Key Performance Indicators about completion of investigations. These figures are published and commented on quarterly, and a fuller narrative given in the Commissioner’s annual report.

For 2013/14, the high-level KPIs are:

Target percentage, type and timescales for case closure		
All applications to be closed in:		
1.1 Four months or under	75%	This KPI covers all applications made, including those which are subsequently found to be invalid. The KPI gives an overall indication of performance.
1.2 Six months or under	85%	
1.3 Nine months or under	95%	
1.4 Twelve months or under	99%	
Invalid applications to be closed in:		
2.1 One month or under	80%	This KPI covers only invalid applications. It informs the Commissioner about how quickly the initial assessment of validity for cases that cannot be investigated is being carried out from date of receipt.
2.2 Two months or under	90%	
2.3 Three months or under	95%	
2.4 Four months or under	99%	
Technical applications to be closed in		
3.1 1.5 months or under	75%	This KPI covers technical cases. These are predominantly cases where the authority failed to deal with the initial request within time limits. It reports on the total time taken from receipt.
3.2 Three months or under	95%	
3.3 Four months or under	100%	
Substantive applications to be closed in:		
4.1 Four months or under	50%	This KPI covers substantive cases. These are valid applications that are investigated and resolved/decided. It reports on the total time taken from receipt.
4.2 Six months or under	80%	
4.3 Nine months or under	95%	
4.4 Twelve months or under	99%	

Resources

The Commissioner’s budget for 2013/14 is:

Total Staff Costs	£1,124,100
Total Revenue Costs	£266,900
Capital Expenditure	£3,500
Total Expenditure	£1,394,500

Summary of Activity

The majority of activity in relation to regulation of FOI – investigations and publication schemes – is recorded as business as usual. Only the major activities are shown in this plan. Underpinning this is the day-to-day management of the organisation and its resources, which again is not listed in detail.

Functional areas are:

- Human Resource Management
- Improving authority practice
- Information management
- Planning and reporting
- Promotion and communications (including the enquiries service)
- Regulation
- Resource management
- Risk management
- Sustainable development
- Quality assurance
- Other

KEY:

BAU – Business as Usual

Priority – relative priority High, Medium or Low

Human resource management

	Activity (Activities run for whole year unless stated otherwise)	Type	Frequency	Start Date	End Date	Strategic Aim					Priority
						1	2	3	4	5	
1	Review of Performance Management System	Project		01/10/2013	31/03/2014					X	H
2	Create Annual Learning & Development Plan (internal)	BAU	Annual	01/05/2013	30/06/2013					X	H
3	Report to SMT on outcomes of annual appraisals	BAU	Annual	01/05/2013	30/06/2013					X	H
4	Build organisational resilience and ensure systems are in place to monitor and support the organisation	Project		01/06/2013	31/03/2014					X	H
5	Review HR Strategy	BAU	Annual	01/01/2014	31/01/2014					X	L
6	Employee Survey - conduct and report to SMT	BAU	Annual	01/10/2013	31/12/2013					X	H
7	Procurement, installation and implementation of HR Management Information System	Project		01/04/2013	31/08/2013					X	H

Improving authority practice

	Activity (Activities run for whole year unless stated otherwise)	Type	Frequency	Start Date	End Date	Strategic Aim					Priority
						1	2	3	4	5	
1	Build a plan, based on evidence, to deliver good practice guidance and self-assessment tools for authorities (plan to be implemented in 2014/15)	Project		01/08/2013	30/03/2014	X	X			X	H
2	Publish Learning and Development strategy	Project		01/07/2013	30/10/2013		X				H
3	Pilot authority self-assessment tool for publication schemes	Project		01/07/2013	30/09/2013	X	X				M
4	Monitor authority compliance with the single Model Publication Scheme	BAU		01/09/2013	31/03/2014	X	X				M
5	Issue the 2 assessment reports outstanding and complete 7 six-month reports to close 2012/13 cases	BAU		01/04/2013	30/12/2013	X	x				H
6	Review NHS Ayrshire and Arran self-assessment	BAU		01/04/2013	31/07/2013	X	x				H
7	Support development of practitioner networks for Part 7 bodies and FE colleges	BAU		01/07/2013	31/03/2014	X	X			X	L
8	Establish and maintain regular contact with Scottish Government agencies group	BAU		01/07/2013	31/03/2014	X	X				L
9	Produce and publish a special report about technical breaches of FOISA/EIRs	Project		01/05/2013	30/09/2013	X	X				H
10	Hold two regional roadshows to promote FOI leadership and governance	Project		01/10/2013	31/03/2014	X	X	X		X	H
11	Collect evidence of barriers to FOI in authorities to inform future developments	BAU				X	X	X	X		L
12	Review existing briefings on exemptions and key issues	BAU		01/10/2013	28/02/2014	X	X	X	X	X	H
13	Collaborate with Holyrood Events to hold the annual Holyrood Conference	BAU		01/09/2013	31/01/2014	X	X	X		X	H
14	Work in partnership with the University of Dundee Law School to deliver the objectives of the Centre for FOI	BAU				X	X		X		L
15	Publish weekly decisions round up	BAU	Weekly			X	X	X		X	H
16	Produce annual report on lessons learned from decisions round-up	BAU	Annual	01/01/2014	31/03/2014	X	X	X		X	M

Information management

	Activity (Activities run for whole year unless stated otherwise)	Type	Frequency	Start Date	End Date	Strategic Aim					Priority
						1	2	3	4	5	
1	Establish (SIC) Publication Scheme Working Group & work programme	Project		01/05/2013	31/01/2014			X		X	H
2	Achieve a "good" rating for the Commissioner's publication scheme	Project		01/06/2013	31/12/2013		X			X	H
3	Case Management System upgrade	Project		01/04/2013	30/06/2013	X		X		X	H
4	Data Protection Officer - review role, train and implement procedures	Project		01/08/2013	31/12/2013					X	H
5	Conduct ARMS assessment of Records Management	Project		01/10/2013	31/12/2013					X	M
6	Prepare and submit a Records Management Plan to the Keeper of the Records for Scotland, to comply with requirements of Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011	Project		01/07/2013	31/01/2014					X	H
7	Conclude 12/13 phase of Records Management Project	Project		01/04/2013	30/06/2013					X	H
8	Implement on-going RM controls and procedures Assurance report to SMT	BAU	Annual	01/07/2013	31/03/2014					X	H
9	Maintenance of secure and reliable IT system	BAU								X	H
10	Create policy and guidance for review of policies, procedures and key documents, including instructions for document control and production of comprehensive register of key documents	Project		01/04/2013	30/06/2013					X	H
11	Manage policy and procedure, and key documents as per review programme	BAU	Quarterly	01/06/2013	31/03/2014					X	H
12	Deal with information requests and reviews in line with policy and procedure, within statutory time scales	BAU						X		X	H
13	Approve and implement findings of review of information requests process	Project		01/04/2013	30/06/2013			X		X	H

Planning and reporting

	Activity (Activities run for whole year unless stated otherwise)	Type	Frequency	Start Date	End Date	Strategic Aim					Priority
						1	2	3	4	5	
1	Publish Statement on 3Es	BAU	Annual	01/09/2013	30/09/2013					X	H
2	Performance and statistical reporting - develop revised requirements	Project		01/04/2013	30/06/2013	X	X	X	X	X	H
3	Performance and statistical reporting - implement result of review	BAU	by 4th wk day each month			X	X	X	X	X	H
4	Public Service Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 - Annual Expenditure Reporting	BAU	Quarterly							X	H
5	Prepare and lay revised Strategic Plan	Project		01/04/2013	30/06/2013	X	X	X	X	X	H
6	Co-ordinate, Prepare and publish Operational Plan 14/15	BAU	Annual	01/01/2014	31/03/2014	X	X	X	X	X	H
7	Establish, then maintain a programme board to oversee and steer project work; review and implement revised project management tools	BAU	Monthly	01/05/2013	31/03/2014	X	X	X	X	X	H
8	Monitor and report progress against Operational Plan	BAU	Quarterly			X	X	X	X	X	H

Promotion and communications

	Activity (Activities run for whole year unless stated otherwise)	Type	Frequency	Start Date	End Date	Strategic Aim					Priority
						1	2	3	4	5	
1	Initiate project to develop an FOI knowledge hub (or similar), external blog and promote via twitter	Project		30/09/2013	31/03/2014	X	X	X	X	X	M
2	Raise public awareness of FOI through local press and radio (through roadshows)	BAU				X		X			M
3	Raise awareness of civil society, especially youth organisations, of FOI rights (through roadshows)	BAU		01/10/2013	31/03/2014			X			M
4	Identify partners to promote FOI rights to young people 2014-15	BAU		01/11/2013	31/03/2014	X	X	X			M
5	Review and refresh our guidance for the public on using FOI rights (increase interactivity of materials, provide online request and application forms, be more people focused)	Project		01/10/2013	31/03/2014			X		X	H
6	Establish appropriate regular communications with MSPs (via newsletter or cross-party group)	BAU		01/10/2013	31/01/2014		X	X	X	X	M
7	Produce a new series of occasional papers on a range of topics as required	BAU				X	X	X	X	X	L
8	Refresh the presentation of our materials and website, and review accessibility	Project		01/10/2013	31/03/2014	X	X	X		X	H
9	Publish the annual report and create a process to follow for delivery of future reports so it becomes BAU	Project		01/04/2013	30/09/2013					X	H
10	Management of and reporting on enquiries service	BAU	Quarterly			X	X	X	X	X	H
11	Liaise with press and other stakeholders about decisions, queries or news items	BAU	as required			X	X	X		X	H
12	Ad Hoc presentations, seminars and workshops, and attendance at appropriate conferences (domestic and international)	BAU	as required			X	X	X	X	X	L
13	Produce and approve Media and Communications Strategy	BAU	Annual	01/04/2013	31/07/2013	X	X	X	X	X	H
14	Website Traffic Report	BAU	Annual			X	X	X		X	M
15	Provide information about the external environment via the Internal Bulletin online	BAU				X	X	X	X	X	M
16	Develop guidance for people who want to make information requests to us and to publish this online	Project		01/05/2013	30/06/2013			X		X	M

Regulation and Enforcement

	Activity (Activities run for whole year unless stated otherwise)	Type	Frequency	Start Date	End Date	Strategic Aim					Priority
						1	2	3	4	5	
1	Register, validate, investigate and decide applications in line with approved procedures and KPIs	BAU	Monthly			X	X	X		X	H
2	Monitor and report on performance against Investigation KPIs	BAU	Monthly					X		X	H
3	Monitor and review Investigation targets & KPIs to ensure appropriate and fit for purpose	BAU	Annual	01/10/2013	31/10/2013			X		X	H
4	Collect and publish FOI statistics for all authorities and review approach taken to identify any changes or additional guidance needed for following year	Project		01/04/2013	31/03/2014	X	X	X		X	H
5	Inform Scottish Ministers about appropriate approaches and bodies suitable to designate under ss4 & 5 as a matter of routine	BAU	Annual	01/10/2013	31/03/2014				X	X	H
6	Publish a special report on Approaches to Designation under ss4 & 5	Project		01/04/2013	31/12/2013				X	X	H
7	Carry out full review of Investigations Procedures	Project		31/05/2013	01/09/2013	X	X			X	H
8	Review MoU with Police Service of Scotland regarding investigation of criminal offences under s65 of FOISA and reg.19 of the EIRs, following creation of single police force	Project		01/06/2013	01/10/2013	X	X				M
9	Pilot new working arrangements for technical applications	Project		01/07/2013	31/03/2014	X	X	X		X	H
10	Provide legal advice to the Commissioner as and when required	BAU				X	X	X	X	X	H
11	Enforcement: issuing practice recommendations, information notices or enforcement notices and taking enforcement action under s53 of FOISA as and when required	BAU				X	X			X	H
12	Support local government, police, further and higher education bodies to adopt the Model Publication Scheme 2013	BAU		01/04/2013	30/06/2013	X	X				H
13	Publish the Model Publication Scheme 2014 and promote to health bodies due to adopt it	BAU		01/09/2013	31/03/2014	X	X				H
14	Support new s5 designees	Project		01/11/2013	31/03/2014	X	X	X	X	X	H
15	Approve the 2011 publications schemes still unapproved	Project		01/04/2013	31/07/2013	X	X				H

Resource management

	Activity (Activities run for whole year unless stated otherwise)	Type	Frequency	Start Date	End Date	Strategic Aim					Priority
						1	2	3	4	5	
1	Set and profile budget for 2014/15	BAU	Annual	01/06/2013	31/08/2013	X	X	X	X	X	H
2	Current year Budget monitoring and control	BAU	Monthly			X	X	X	X	X	H
3	Workforce planning	BAU	Quarterly			X	X	X	X	X	H
4	Develop arrangements for Shared Service - accounting, to include review of Financial Memorandum Manual	Project		01/08/2013	31/03/2014					X	H
5	Audited Accounts - drafting and clean approval	Project		01/04/2013	31/07/2013					X	H
6	Maintenance of premises	BAU								X	M
7	Procurement and contract management	BAU								X	M
8	Provision of Finance Statement of Assurance to SIC	BAU	Annual	01/05/2013	31/05/2013					X	H

Risk management

	Activity (Activities run for whole year unless stated otherwise)	Type	Frequency	Start Date	End Date	Strategic Aim					Priority
						1	2	3	4	5	
1	Regular review of risk, updating of register and annual risk report	BAU	Monthly			X	X	X	X	X	H
2	Define requirements for and procure internal audit provision	Project		01/06/2013	31/08/2013	X	X	X	X	X	H
3	Implement internal audit plan	BAU	Annual	01/10/2013	31/03/2014	X	X	X	X	X	H
4	BCP - maintenance of plan and testing	BAU	Annual	01/07/2013	31/03/2014	X	X	X	X	X	M
5	H&S reporting and procedures	BAU	Quarterly			X	X	X	X	X	H

Sustainable development

	Activity (Activities run for whole year unless stated otherwise)	Type	Frequency	Start Date	End Date	Strategic Aim					Priority
						1	2	3	4	5	
1	Monitor Carbon Footprint	BAU	Quarterly							X	M

Quality assurance

	Activity (Activities run for whole year unless stated otherwise)	Type	Frequency	Start Date	End Date	Strategic Aim					Priority
						1	2	3	4	5	
1	User Feedback - collection and analysis	BAU	Monthly			X	X	X		X	M
2	Compliments and Complaints - recording and analysis	BAU	Six Monthly							X	M
3	Information requests - monitoring against S60 Code of Practice	BAU	Quarterly							X	H
4	Equalities Statistics - collection and analysis	BAU	Annual					X		X	H
5	Review of Quality indicators and targets	Project		01/09/2013	31/12/2013					X	H
6	Implement Model Complaints Handling procedure and confirm compliance	Project		01/08/2013	31/03/2014					X	M

Other

	Activity (Activities run for whole year unless stated otherwise)	Type	Frequency	Start Date	End Date	Strategic Aim					Priority
						1	2	3	4	5	
1	Bi-annual research levels of public awareness of FOI rights	BAU		01/07/2013	31/07/2013			X		X	M
2	Review section 60 Code of Practice	Project		01/04/2013	01/08/2013				X		M
3	Scope research into requester experience of FOI, using whatdotheyknow and mystery shopping	Project		01/01/2013	30/06/2014		X	X			L
4	Review compliance with Equalities legislation and implement changes needed (if any)	Project		01/09/2013	31/12/2013	X	X		X	X	M

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