

<b>Report to:</b>	QSMTM
<b>Report by:</b>	Helen Gardner-Swift
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	25 April 2018
<b>Subject/ Title:</b> (and VC no)	<b>Quality Assurance – Enquiries</b> VC101447
<b>Attached Papers</b> (title and VC no)	None

## Purpose of report

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- To provide assurance on the quality of responses to enquiries as defined by the agreed quality criteria and as required by the Governance Reporting Arrangements (GRA).

## Recommendation and actions

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- I recommend
  - the SMT notes the report
  - this report be published

## Executive summary

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- The Scottish Information Commissioner (the Commissioner) has a duty to promote good practice and a power to give advice on the operation of FOI. One of the ways the Commissioner does this is by providing an enquiries service to the public and to public authorities. The Commissioner recognises the importance of good performance and quality in the delivery of this service and quality assurance has been carried out in relation to the enquiries service. The purpose of the quality assurance is to:
  - help us achieve greater consistency across the office
  - ensure that the Enquiries Procedures are being followed and that responses to enquires are accurate
  - identify and evidence good practice that we can share and learn from (including new material for the website) and
  - inform line managers about individual performance and, if there are learning or development needs, to help us better support officers
- Responses to enquiries are assessed against a number of set criteria. The assessments are carried out by the Head of Corporate Service (HOCS), the Head of Enforcement (HOE) and the Head of Policy and Information (HOPI).
- Quality assurance has been carried out in relation to the enquiries service although the number of assessment carried out each month has reduced.
- Under our procedures 10 enquiries per month are due to be assessed, amounting to 120 assessments per annum (this would equate to approximately 8 % of the 1,573 enquiries received in 2017-18). The resources and time taken to assess this number of enquiries,

including the follow up records management actions result in a procedure which is resource intensive. In addition, as it was evident that the responses to enquiries generally meet the required quality standard, the number of enquiries assessed this year reduced to 40 (approximately 12%).

7. From the assessments that have been undertaken I can conclude the following:
  - (i) the assessments have been carried out objectively
  - (ii) there is consistency across the office
  - (iii) the Enquiries Procedures are being followed
  - (iv) responses to enquires are accurate
  - (v) areas of good practice have been noted and there have not been any significant occurrences of bad practice
8. Therefore, I can provide the assurance that the enquiries service meets the agreed quality criteria.
9. I will be carrying out a formal review of the Quality Assurance Criteria and Procedures: Enquiries (VC 98932) during 2018-19.

### **Risk impact**

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10. This assurance report contributes to the control measures aimed at reducing the likelihood and impact of Risk 3 (failure to engage) in the Operational Risk Register.

### **Equalities impact**

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11. None arising from this review

### **Resources impact**

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12. None

### **Operational/ strategic plan impact**

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13. None

### **Records management impact (including any key documents actions)**

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14. None

### **Consultation and Communication**

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15. QSMTM minute.

### **Publication**

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16. I recommend that this committee report is published in full.