

Publication scheme handbook

How we comply with the publication scheme duty



Scottish Information
Commissioner

Contents

Introduction	1
Policy Statement	1
Roles and responsibilities	2
Maintaining and developing the Commissioner's guide to information	2
Publication	2
Content review	2
Routine maintenance	3
Document control sheet	4

Glossary and abbreviations

Term used	Explanation
Commissioner	Scottish Information Commissioner
FOI	Freedom of Information
FOISA	Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
EIRs	Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004
MPS	Model Publication Scheme
GTI	Guide to information
HOCS	Head of Corporate Services
FAM	Finance and Administration Manager
HOPI	Head of Policy and Information
SMT	Senior Management Team

Introduction

1. This handbook provides:
 - our policy on the Commissioner's compliance with the publication duties in the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (the EIRs)
 - our procedures for publication and maintenance of the Commissioner's Guide to information (GTI).
2. It explains how the Commissioner, as an individual Scottish public authority, complies with FOI law as regards its own publication.
3. You can read more about how the Commissioner fulfils its wider statutory responsibilities for ensuring that **all** authorities comply with the publication scheme duties at <https://www.itspublicknowledge.info/publication-schemes>

Policy Statement

4. The Commissioner has complied with the statutory duty in section 23 of FOISA to adopt and maintain a publication scheme by adopting the Commissioner's [Model Publication Scheme](#) (MPS). The MPS provides the strategic framework for proactive publication of information by the Commissioner's office.
5. The Commissioner publishes and maintains an online [Guide to Information](#) (GTI) which:
 - allows the public to see what information is available (and what is not available) in relation to each class of information in the Commissioner's Publication Scheme
 - states what charges may be applied
 - explains how to find the information easily
 - provides contact details for enquiries and to get help with accessing the information
 - explains how to request information we hold but have not published
6. The Commissioner is committed to:
 - ensuring the delivery of our functions meets and keeps pace with recognised standards, and is delivered openly and transparently, and
 - being recognised as an organisation of accessible experts that is run efficiently, governed effectively and leads by example in the delivery of its statutory functions.
7. The Commissioner therefore aims to achieve an excellence rating in its publication scheme compliance against the Standards and Criteria of the [Publishing information](#) module of the Commissioner's Self-Assessment Toolkit.

Roles and responsibilities

8. The responsibility for ensuring that the GTI demonstrates due regard to the public interest in information held by the Commissioner (a duty under section 23(3) of FOISA) is shared by the Commissioner, the SMT and all members of staff.
9. The HOCS has lead responsibility for
 - the publication and maintenance of the Commissioner's Publication Scheme and the GTI
 - ensuring the Commissioner's GTI complies with updates of the MPS
 - providing annual assurance reports to the Commissioner and the SMT in line with the Governance Reporting Arrangements
10. The FAM is responsible for
 - managing and maintaining the content of the Commissioner's GTI
 - ensuring that published documents are the latest version, as recorded in the Register of Key Documents
 - ensuring that the Register of Key Documents is comprehensive and up to date
11. The Administrator supports the FAM by uploading or removing the GTI content in accordance with the FAM's instructions.

Maintaining and developing the Commissioner's guide to information

Publication

12. The structure of Commissioner's GTI follows that of the MPS (classes of information).
13. The GTI is published on the Commissioner's website in the About Us section. Paper copies are available on request.
14. Publications are usually available for three years (current + two years although some documents are available for longer periods, for example, the Commissioner's Annual Reports) .

Content review

15. The content of the GTI is reviewed formally by the HOCS annually as part of the assurance processes. The purpose of this review is to:
 - assess its performance against the Standards and Criteria of the Publishing information module of the Commissioner's Self-Assessment Toolkit.
 - identify and agree whether new information should be added to the GTI to reflect the public interest in that information.
16. As part of the review process, the HOCS will seek confirmation from the HOE and the HOPI on the matters set out at 15(i) and (ii) above

Routine maintenance

17. The FAM updates the content of the Commissioner's GTI as:
 - key documents are approved (see Key Documents Handbook), and
 - when new documents are added to a series e.g. financial reports and operational plan monitoring reports.
18. The default deadline for publication of the above is within one week of approval, if possible.
19. Each time the online GTI is updated we change the "date last updated" reference at the bottom of the website page to reassure readers of the currency of the information.

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