

Publication Scheme Handbook

**Policy and Guidance for the Scottish Information
Commissioner's Publication Scheme and Guide to
Information**



Scottish Information
Commissioner

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Glossary and abbreviations

Term used	Explanation
FOISA	Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
PSWG	Publication Scheme Working Group
GTI	Guide to Information

Cross-referenced INVU documents

INVU No	INVU name
INV41370	Register of Key Documents
INV41368	Management and Review of Key Documents

Policy

Introduction

1. Section 23 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) requires Scottish public authorities to produce and maintain a publication scheme. Authorities are under a legal obligation to:
 - (i) adopt and maintain a (publication) scheme [...] which relates to the publication of information by the authority and is approved by the (Scottish Information) Commissioner
 - (ii) publish information in accordance with that scheme
 - (iii) from time to time review the scheme.
2. A publication scheme must specify:
 - (i) classes of information which the authority publishes or intends to publish
 - (ii) the manner in which information of each class is, or is intended to be published; and
 - (iii) whether the published information is, or is intended to be, available to the public free of charge or on payment.
3. Section 24 of FOISA makes provision for the Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC) to prepare and approve model publication schemes. SIC's approved schemes require authorities to create and maintain a 'Guide to Information' which must:
 - (i) allow the public to see what information is available in relation to each class
 - (ii) state what charges may be applied
 - (iii) explain how to find the information easily
 - (iv) provide contact details for enquires and to get help with accessing the information
 - (v) explain how to request information that has not been published.
4. The requirement to produce and maintain a publication scheme applies to SIC.
5. SIC publishes a publication scheme self-assessment checklist for use by authorities which have adopted the Commissioner's Model Publication Scheme. The aim of the checklist is to enable an authority to evaluate whether its guide to information is compliant with freedom of information legislation and to identify where it could improve its practice in proactive publication.

Context

6. FOISA gives the Commissioner an extensive range of powers to enforce and promote the right to information. In the Strategic Plan 2013-2016, SIC aims to be a value-adding commissioner in a Scotland where those delivering public functions disseminate and disclose information willingly and openly.

7. One of our five strategic aims is to be recognised as an organisation of accessible experts that is run efficiently, governed effectively, and leads by example.

Policy Statement

8. SIC's Publication Scheme complies with FOISA.
9. SIC adopts the relevant Model Publication Scheme, which provide the strategic framework for the proactive publication of information.
10. Given the nature of SIC's statutory powers, and our strategic aims, it is our objective to maintain our publication scheme such that it can attain 'Level 5 - Excellent' when evaluated using the Commissioner's 'Publication Scheme – self assessment checklist (single Model Publication Scheme adoptions)'.
11. There is a Publication Scheme Working Group (PSWG) which will review the Guide to Information (GTI) annually. The purpose of the review is to ensure that the publication scheme is being maintained in line with the 'Level 5 – Excellent' standard. The review forms part of the Governance Reporting Arrangements.

Guidance

Management and governance

Table 1: Roles and responsibilities

Title	Responsibility	Action
Commissioner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic responsibility for the production and maintenance of a Publication Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure statutory duties are met Ensure systems are established and implemented for the maintenance of an 'excellent' publication scheme
Senior Management Team (SMT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared responsibility for developing and maintaining an 'excellent' publication scheme Shared responsibility for ensuring the GTI is maintained appropriately Shared responsibility for ensuring webpage content is maintained appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approves the adoption of the model publication scheme Ensures policies and procedures are developed and maintained to support the proactive publication of appropriate documents in the publication scheme, the GTI and webpages
Head of Operational Management (HOOM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead for the quality, maintenance and development of the Publication Scheme and GTI Provides assurance to SIC/SMT Chairs PSWG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible Manager for the development, maintenance and implementation of the 'Publication Scheme Handbook' and 'Management and Review of Key Documents' Provides annual assurance report to SMT in line with the Governance Reporting Arrangements

Title	Responsibility	Action
Finance and Administration Manager (FAM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead for managing the content of the Publication Scheme & GTI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the Register of Key Documents is comprehensive, current, and aligned with the content of the Publication Scheme and GTI Alerting Responsible Managers to the need for corrective action
Freedom of Information Officers (P&I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead for maintaining webpage content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and maintaining webpage content
Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uploading and removing content in line with instructions from the FAM
Publication Scheme Working Group (PSWG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GTI – Quality Assurance Communication of issues between PSWG and teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review of the GTI Ad-hoc duties, as required

Maintaining and developing the guide to information

Guide to information

12. The GTI is structured in line with the adopted Model Publication Scheme.
13. The content of the GTI is amended frequently and the website is the primary form of publication.
14. If a request is received for a paper version of the GTI, go to <http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/home/SICPublicationScheme/PSGuidetoInfo.aspx> and select the 'Print Page' option. This ensures the requestor is provided with details of the current GTI and its content. The request must be responded to within 2 working days.

Key documents

15. The SIC maintains a Register of Key Documents (INV41370). The document 'Management and Review of Key Documents' (INV41368) sets out how key documents are managed. The FAM has responsibility for maintaining the Register and for ensuring key documents are published in the GTI, as specified in the Register.
16. Each key document has an identified Responsible Manager and Approver. All major reviews of key documents (and, optionally, minor revisions - at the discretion of the Responsible Manager) are provided to the Approver with a Committee Report.
17. The 'Records Management' section of the Committee Report must be completed in accordance with the guidance contained in the Committee Report standard form. The Document Control Sheet for key documents must also be fully completed.
18. Of particular relevance are:
 - (i) confirmation that the document is to be published
 - (ii) the document class to be used

- (iii) any communication plans e.g. if publication in the GTI has to be co-ordinated with the creation of a new or revised webpage, or a press release.

19. It is the responsibility of the Approver to ensure the relevant instructions are communicated to the FAM for implementation (and any other parties, as appropriate (e.g. P&I)).

Updating versions of documents already published

20. When a key document is subject to a major review (i.e. a new major version is prepared) the new major version must replace the version currently published.

21. Publication should occur within one week of approval, unless the agreed communications plan determines otherwise.

22. In general, minor revisions are not published. However, it may be appropriate to do so in certain circumstances e.g. when the minor revision has been to correct an error noticed after publication of the approved major version. Publication of minor versions is at the discretion of the Approver.

Publishing new documents

23. When a new key document is created (for example, a new policy) the approved major version should be published. The arrangements described under 'Key Documents', above, apply.

24. Publication should occur within one week of approval, unless the agreed communications plan determines otherwise.

Documents which are part of a regular series of publications

25. Some documents are published as part of a series. Examples include:

- (i) financial reports
- (ii) operational plan quality monitoring reports
- (iii) caseload 'dashboard' reports.

26. The trigger for the publication of the latest in a series is approval of the latest document.

27. Publication series are published on relevant webpages. The GTI should record the existence of the series, and provide a web link to the relevant webpage.

28. Publication should occur within one week of approval, unless the agreed communications plan determines otherwise.

29. Publication series must be published for current plus two years.

Publication Scheme Working Group (PSWG)

30. The PSWG's membership comprises:

- (i) HOOM (Chair)
- (ii) FAM
- (iii) Administrator (with responsibility for records management)

(iv) DHOE / FOIO – Enforcement

(v) FOIO - Policy & Information

31. The purpose of the PSWG is:

(i) To carry out an annual review of the Guide to Information

(ii) Support the implementation of improvements identified from reviews

(iii) The communication of publication scheme issues between the PSWG and teams

(iv) To carry out ad-hoc duties as required.

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