

Registers of Scotland

Openness and Transparency Policy

Author	Head of Information Governance		
Reviewed	Keeper		
Approval	EMT	Approval Date	27/08/2020
Policy Version	1.0		
Review Responsibility	Head of Information Governance	Review Date	Aug 2022
Suitable for Publication	Yes		

1. Purpose and scope

1.1 This policy sets out the commitment of the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland (RoS) to promote openness, transparency and accountability in public life. RoS is a public registration organisation – openness and transparency lie at the heart of who we are.

1.2 RoS recognises the increasing public expectations in respect of openness and transparency, and the desire of stakeholders to understand how public bodies perform, operate, make decisions and spend money. We aim to meet these expectations, and to keep pace with good practice.

1.3 RoS recognises the powerful role that effective public scrutiny can play in driving good governance within public bodies, thereby serving the public interest. We will invite and facilitate effective public scrutiny of our organisation.

2. Openness and Transparency

2.1 Openness is an attitude. We will promote an organisational culture which displays this attitude. Our organisational leadership will promote openness by default, whether by driving transparency, or by inviting scrutiny. We will create opportunities for stakeholders to ask and challenge us, and we will listen to them.

2.2 Transparency is a process. We will engage fully with our obligations to make certain information publicly available and will go beyond these to identify and publish information in the public interest. We will do this through leadership, practice, training, monitoring public interest, user focus, fairness and lawfulness.

2.2.1 Our organisational **leadership** will promote publication of information wherever appropriate, challenging decisions not to publish information, and remaining alert to changes in the public interest. We will publish information about our performance, operations, decisions and spending wherever it is appropriate to do so.

2.2.2 Our **practice** will be clear for internal and external stakeholders, and we will make the publication of information an essential element of the forward planning process.

2.2.3 Our **colleagues** will be equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to effectively operate our practice and procedures.

2.2.4 Our mechanisms to monitor the changing **public interest** will create opportunities for stakeholders to inform our publication policy and practice. We will proactively engage with audiences to better understand their needs. Publication decisions will be driven by public interest, with the assumption in favour of publication.

2.2.5 Our **user-focussed** approach to publication will ensure that our varied audiences have a positive experience. The information we publish will be accurate, accessible and made available in a timely manner, without unnecessary delay. We will optimise the value of the information that we publish by being clear about its context and purpose.

2.2.6 Our practice will be **fair and lawful**, appropriately balancing all rights and obligations, such as individual privacy and commercial sensitivity, with our commitment to transparency. We will not routinely publish information pertaining to individual cases (for example regarding the registration of a particular property), other than in line with our statutory obligations.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 All RoS staff and contractors must operate the various procedures and controls which facilitate the fulfilment of this policy in practice.

4.3 RoS Executive Management Team (EMT) are accountable for the fulfilment of this policy.

4.4 RoS Board, and Audit and Risk Committee are responsible for monitoring and supporting RoS performance by constructively challenging to ensure compliance with policy requirements.

5. Approval and review

This policy will be reviewed and approved at two year intervals, unless earlier review is appropriate.