

**THE SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE**

**NHS FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

**MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME FOR  
NHS BOARDS AND SPECIAL HEALTH BOARDS**

**NHS FREEDOM OF INFORMATION  
MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME FOR NHS BOARDS AND SPECIAL HEALTH  
BOARDS**

Welcome to the Scottish Ambulance Service Board's Publication Scheme. The Publication Scheme is in 2 parts, as follows:

- PART ONE: Introduction and Background Information**
- PART TWO: The Classes of Information**

## **PART ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **• The NHS in Scotland**

1. The NHS in Scotland is a large and complex organisation but is essentially organised into 2 tiers. The Scottish Government Health Department (SGHD) is responsible for national policy and NHS Boards are responsible for local health planning and improvement and for the delivery of hospital, community and primary care services. There are also 8 Special Health Boards which provide services on a national basis. The SGHD is responsible to Scottish Ministers and Ministers are accountable to the Scottish Parliament for the activities of the NHS in Scotland. The Head of SGHD is also Chief Executive of NHSScotland and, as the accountable officer, he is directly accountable to the Scottish Parliament for financial propriety and regularity and for achieving best value from the resources allocated to SGHD and NHSScotland.

2. This Publication Scheme covers the 15 NHS Boards and the 8 Special Health Boards in Scotland.

#### **NHS Boards**

Argyll & Clyde  
Ayrshire & Arran  
Borders  
Dumfries & Galloway  
Fife  
Forth Valley  
Grampian  
Greater Glasgow  
Highland  
Lanarkshire  
Lothian  
Orkney  
Shetland  
Tayside  
Western Isles

#### **Special Health Boards**

NHS Quality Improvement Scotland  
NHS Health Scotland  
NHS Education for Scotland  
Common Services Agency  
Golden Jubilee National Hospital  
Scottish Ambulance Service  
State Hospital  
NHS 24

3. The Scottish Ambulance Service is a Special Health Board of NHS Scotland. The Scottish Ambulance Service Order 1999 established the Scottish Ambulance Service as a Special Health Board from 1 April 1999 and empowered it to exercise the functions of the Scottish Ministers in relation to the provision of ambulances and other means of transport conferred by Section 45 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 as amended.

4. A Special Health Board is a body corporate consisting of a Chair appointed by the Scottish Ministers and such numbers of other members so appointed as Scottish Ministers think fit.

5. Special Health Boards manage their day to day affairs without a detailed oversight from Ministers and the Scottish Government Health Department. Special Health Boards are accountable to Ministers and the Scottish Government Health Department for the financial and operational performance of their services.

6. The Scottish Ambulance Service Board is responsible for the delivery of ambulance services, both emergency and non-emergency, across the whole of Scotland, including the Western, Orkney and Shetland Isles. It does this through five ambulance Divisions headed by General Managers who have devolved responsibility and accountability for the delivery of ambulance services including an appropriate response to CBRN or major incidents. The Service has over 4,000 staff at over 150 locations across Scotland. When '999' and emergency telephone calls are received, these are handled through state of the art Emergency Medical Dispatch Centres based in Inverness, Edinburgh and Cardonald. The Scottish Ambulance Service prioritises its emergency response to these calls to ensure that life threatening calls are responded to first. To enable this to be done, operators in Emergency Medical Dispatch Centres ask a number of questions about the nature of the illness or injury. In most cases, an accident and emergency ambulance is on its way while a '999' call is being answered. The answers to the questions will enable our operators to determine the severity of the incident and send an appropriate response. In some cases, advice or instructions are given to the caller on how the patient can be helped while awaiting our emergency response. Thirty local non-emergency ambulance transport hospital sites have been identified and are currently being set up across Scotland. These local sites will enable more local contact with patients and hospital/clinic staff. The Service responds to over half a million emergency incidents each year and carries out over 2 million non-emergency patient journeys. The Scottish Ambulance Service also has the UK's only publicly funded integrated air ambulance service consisting of 4 fixed wing aircraft and 2 helicopters.

- **What is a Publication Scheme?**

7. The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (the FOI Act) recognises that as a member of the public you have the right to know how public services such as the NHS are organised and run, how much they cost and how you can make complaints if you need to. You have the right to know which services are being provided, the targets that are being set, the standards of services that are expected and the results achieved. We are committed to openness and transparency in the provision of information to the public.

8. This Publication Scheme is made under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and is a guide to the information routinely published by the Scottish Ambulance Service. The Publication Scheme will help you to find all the information which the Scottish Ambulance Service publishes. It is organised into a series of 14 Classes (paragraph 21) and the information is encompassed within the Classes (paragraphs 28-40). It is a description of the information held by the Scottish Ambulance Service which we make publicly available. Although the information in the Classes is common to NHS Boards and Special Health Boards, please note that the titles of some of the documents/information may vary according to the Scottish Ambulance Service. We shall review the Scheme at regular intervals and monitor how it is operating. It is important to us that this Scheme meets your needs and we have designed it to be a route map so that you can find information about the Scottish Ambulance Service easily. Under Section 23 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, the Scottish Ambulance Service has a legal duty to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme for the publication of the Scottish Ambulance Service information. The purpose of the Act is to promote greater openness by public authorities (of which the Scottish Ambulance Service is one).

- **Formulation of the Scheme**

9. This Publication Scheme has been drawn up by the Scottish Executive Health Department. To help in this process a Working Group of representatives with FOI responsibilities from all NHS Boards and Special Health Boards (SHBs) was set up. This Working Group has met regularly and has been extensively involved in developing and drawing up this Scheme.

10. The specific Classes utilised in the Scheme take into account the considerable practical experience and knowledge of the FOI Working Group. The Classes also incorporate, where this is still relevant, a number of the key areas from the Code of Practice on Openness in the NHS in Scotland published in 1995.

11. It has not been possible to consult with the public in relation to this Publication Scheme for the Scottish Ambulance Service. Consultations will be part of the Scottish Ambulance Service ongoing commitment to openness and transparency and to implementing the Patient Focus/Public Involvement policy approach. Your comments will be welcomed and will help us to revise and update our Scheme. Please send any comments you may have to the contact set out in paragraph 15 of this Scheme.

12. The Scottish Executive, the FOI Working Group and all NHS Boards and Special Health Boards will be closely monitoring the operation and implementation of this Scheme. We will consider, when necessary and appropriate, the introduction of modifications to the Scheme to reflect public usage, comment and demand.

- **Information Management**

13. Information falling into the Classes will be retained in line with the Scottish Ambulance Service retention and disposal policies. Information not required for the current business purposes of the Scottish Ambulance Service is stored:

(a) at the National Headquarters of the Scottish Ambulance Service, Tipperlinn Road, Edinburgh EH10 5UU

- **Feedback**

14. Each NHS Board/Special Health Board has designated a senior person who has overall responsibility for the Publication Scheme. For the Scottish Ambulance Service this person is:

Shirley Rogers  
Director of Human Resources and Clinical Development  
Scottish Ambulance Service  
National Headquarters  
Tipperlinn Road  
Edinburgh EH10 5UU  
Tel 0131 446 7017  
srogers@scotamb.co.uk  
Fax 0131 446 7001

15. If you have any questions, comments or complaints about the Scheme itself or how we operate this Scheme, please contact the FOI contact below at the Scottish Ambulance Service who will advise you on how we will consider the issue you have raised.

Kathleen Lowson  
Corporate Affairs Manager  
Scottish Ambulance Service  
National Headquarters  
Tipperlinn Road  
Edinburgh EH10 5UU  
Tel 0131 446 7019  
klowson@nhs.net  
Fax 0131 446 7001

16. If we are unable to resolve any complaint, you can complain to the Scottish Information Commissioner who oversees the Act and whose contact details are below. From 1 January 2005, a general right of access to information comes into force; there will be a formal appeal mechanism when information is withheld. Further details on this will be available on the Commissioner's web site at [www.itspublicknowledge.info](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info) before this date.

Kevin Dunion OBE  
Scottish Information Commissioner  
Kinburn Castle  
Doubledykes Road  
ST ANDREWS  
Fife KY16 9DS  
Tel: 01334 464610  
E-Mail: [enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info)

- **Rights of Access to Information**

17. Until 1 January 2005, in addition to accessing the information identified in this Publication Scheme, you are entitled to request information about the Scottish Ambulance Service under the Code of Practice on Openness in the NHS in Scotland. Copies are available, free of charge, from the Scottish Executive Health Department, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh EH1 3DG or from the person(s) listed in paragraph 15 above. Sometimes some or all of the information cannot be provided and we will explain the reasons why not when this happens.

18. From 1 January 2005 the FOI Act will also oblige the Scottish Ambulance Service to respond to requests about the information which it holds and is recorded in any form and it will create a general right of access to that information. The right to access this information is subject to certain exemptions listed in the FOI Act which the Scottish Ambulance Service has to take into consideration before deciding what information can be supplied.

19. The FOI Act does not change the right of patients to protection of their right to confidentiality as a user of the services we provide in accordance with Article 8 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Data Protection Act 1998 and at common law. Maintaining the legal right to patient confidentiality continues to be an important commitment on our part.

- **Personal Information**

20. To help with the issue of personal information, we have appointed someone who is called a **Caldicott Guardian**, and who has responsibility to ensure the protection of patient confidentiality throughout the Scottish Ambulance Service in accordance with your legal rights. In the Scottish Ambulance Service our Caldicott Guardian is:

Dr George Crooks  
Interim Medical Director  
Scottish Ambulance Service  
National Headquarters  
Tipperlinn Road  
Edinburgh EH10 5UU  
Tel 0131 446 7015  
gcrooks@scotamb.co.uk  
Fax 0131 446 7001

21. Under the Data Protection Act 1998 you are also entitled, subject to some restrictions and requirements, to access your clinical records or any other personal information held about you and you can contact Mr Robert Johnstone, Data Protection Officer, North & West Division, Raigmore Gardens, Inverness IV2 3UL to do this.

- **Environmental Information**

22. New Environmental Information Regulations are also likely to be introduced from 2005. These will enable similar access to environmental information, as under the FOI Act.

## **PART TWO: THE CLASSES OF INFORMATION**

23. The information is grouped into broad classes as follows:

- (a) The NHS: Who We Are.
- (b) Corporate Information/Governance.
- (c) Financial Information.
- (d) The Policy Framework for the Scottish Ambulance Service.
- (e) Improvement, Change and Innovation.
- (f) Reports of Independent Assessments.
- (g) Patient Focus/Public Involvement.
- (h) Policies and Procedures.
- (i) Complaints Procedures.
- (j) Staff Governance.
- (k) Press Releases.
- (l) Public Health.
- (m) Environmental Information.

24. Information within each Class will be available via the web site and/or as hard copies or other media. Information which is available via our web site may be removed after a period of 7 years. We will provide information in alternative formats on request to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

**Online:** most of the information listed in our publication scheme is available from our website: [[www.scottishambulance.co.uk](http://www.scottishambulance.co.uk)].

**By e-mail:** if the information you request is not available on this website, but is listed in our Publication Scheme, we will send it to you by e-mail, wherever practicable.

**By phone:** information can be requested over the telephone. Please provide full contact details, including a telephone number, so that we can telephone to clarify any details, if necessary. Our contact telephone number is shown in paragraph 15 of this Publication Scheme.

**By post:** most information is also available in a paper copy form. Please address your request to the person named in paragraph 15 of this Publication Scheme. When requesting information, please include the following details: your name and address and telephone number, the information or documents you want to see and any fee applicable (see paragraph 23).

**Personal visits:** for some classes of information, you will need to make an appointment to view the information. Please contact, in the first instance, the person named in paragraph 15 of this Publication Scheme.

*If you have difficulty determining the information you want to see, please contact the person named in paragraph 15 of this Publication Scheme.*

- **Charging Policy**

25. We will not charge for access to information available online or if it is sent to you by e-mail, floppy disk or CD. However, if printed copy is requested, this will be charged at 10p per page of copy. No charge will be levied for the provision of any promotional and advisory leaflets and related material unless they are published for sale, in which case the cover price will be indicated to you. On receipt of requests where a charge is to be levied, you will be advised of the total charge which will require to be paid prior to delivery of your requested information. This may include postage. The person named in paragraph 15 has the discretion to waive any charge.

- **Exemptions and Non-Disclosure of Information**

26. We are committed to an open and transparent delivery of service whenever possible and it is our intention to publish information in our Publication Scheme that is in the public interest. We are committed to the communities we serve, delivering high quality health services and improving health. We are conscious of the need to protect the physical and mental health of the individual and it must be recognised that certain information will not be disclosed, both in the public interest and based on various exemptions under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

27. Our aim is to be as open as possible. However, information may be withheld from any of the classes of information listed below, where we consider that disclosure may seriously prejudice legal proceedings or our regulatory or enforcement activities, or where disclosure is otherwise prohibited by law. We may also withhold information which may seriously prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation and we will withhold information which is personal information under the Data Protection Act 1998.

28. We will, when appropriate, apply reasonable consideration to the exemptions afforded under the public interest test and absolute exemptions outlined in Section 2 of the FOI Act and aim to disclose information wherever possible.

29. In these cases, where we withhold the information we will indicate the reasons for doing so. If you wish to complain about our decision to withhold information, please contact the person named in paragraph 15 of this Publication Scheme. If an exemption is claimed for a particular part of a document, access may still be given to the section(s) of the document not subject to exemption. Even if information is considered exempt under the Publication Scheme, requests for this information can be made after 1 January 2005.

#### **Class (a) – The NHS: Who We Are**

30. The information in this Class will be more detailed than that set out in paragraph 3 of this Publication Scheme (PS). This Class contains detailed information on the structure, organisation and responsibilities of the Scottish Ambulance Service.

*For example:* information on Board members.

#### **Class (b) – Corporate Information/Governance**

31. This Class contains information on the corporate governance of the Scottish Ambulance Service and on the overall performance of the Board.

*For example:* Minutes of Board meetings and agenda papers submitted to Board meetings; Board Members Register of Interests; the Scottish Ambulance Service Annual Report; the letter from the Scottish Executive on the annual Accountability Review.

#### **Class (c) - Financial Information**

32. This Class contains information on the finances of the Scottish Ambulance Service.

*For example:* annual audited accounts; external Auditors letter.

#### **Class (d) - The Policy Framework for the Scottish Ambulance Service**

33. This Class contains information on the policies of the Scottish Ambulance Service and on the services provided, the standards/targets to be maintained and key performance indicators and certain information related to the costs of, and investment in, these services.

*For example:* strategies; promotional/informational/advisory leaflets/brochures/pamphlets etc on the provision of services.

#### **Class (e) - Improvement, Change and Innovation**

34. This Class contains information on the Scottish Ambulance Service plans for changes to and innovations in the delivery of services.

*For example:* Our Future Strategy.

### **Class (f) - Reports of Independent Assessments on the Scottish Ambulance Service**

35. This Class contains information on reports of independent assessments of the Scottish Ambulance Service.

*For example:* reports by NHS Quality Improvement Scotland;

### **Class (g) – Patient Focus/Public Involvement**

36. This Class contains information on consultation procedures, timescales and how you can become involved. It also contains consultation documents/publications and details of the public responses to consultation.

*For example:* Our PFPI Strategy

### **Class (h) – Policies and Procedures**

37. This Class contains information on the policies and procedures of the Scottish Ambulance Service which are primarily, but not exclusively, focussed on the internal service delivery functions of the Board.

### **Class (i) – Complaints Procedures**

38. This Class contains information on the complaints procedures for the Scottish Ambulance Service.

*For example:* complaints procedures; Ombudsman reports.

### **Class (j) – Staff Governance**

39. This Class contains information on the employment policies and procedures of the Scottish Ambulance Service.

*For example:* maternity policy, flexible working policy.

### **Class (k) – Press Releases**

40. This Class contains information on our communications with the press and media.

*For example:* news releases.

### **Class (l) – Public Health**

41. This Class contains information on the health of the population we serve.

*For example:* Clinical statistics.

## **Class (m) – Environmental Information**

42. This Class contains information on the property we own/use and other environmental information.

- **Copyright**

43. The material available through this Publication Scheme is subject to the Scottish Ambulance Service copyright unless otherwise indicated. Unless expressly indicated on the material to the contrary, it may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium, provided it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading manner. Where any of the copyright items in this Scheme are being re-published or copied to others, you must identify the source of the material and acknowledge the copyright status. Permission to reproduce material does not extend to any material accessed through the Publication Scheme that is the copyright of third parties. You must obtain authorisation to reproduce such material from the copyright holders concerned.

- **Useful Resources**

44. Websites:

[www.itspublicknowledge.info](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info)

(This is the Scottish Information Commissioner's website.)

[www.scotland.gov.uk/government/foi](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/government/foi)

(This is the Scottish Government's FOI website.)

[www.show.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk)

(This is information provided by NHSScotland.)

[www.foi.nhs.uk](http://www.foi.nhs.uk)

(This is the NHS (England) Freedom of Information website.)

45. Publications:

FOI (Scotland) Act 2002.

Code of Practice under Section 60 of the FOI (Scotland) Act 2002.

Code of Practice under Section 61 of the FOI (Scotland) Act 2002.

Code of Practice on Openness in the NHS in Scotland, 1995.