

# **SCOTTISH PUBLIC PENSIONS AGENCY**

## **Publication Scheme**

**Produced as required by the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002**

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## **SECTION 1 : INTRODUCTION TO THE PUBLICATION SCHEME**

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) provides individuals with a right of access to all recorded information held by Scotland's public authorities. Anyone can use this right, and information can only be withheld where FOISA expressly permits it.

Section 23 of FOISA also requires that all Scottish public authorities maintain a publication scheme. A publication scheme sets out the types of information that a public authority routinely makes available. This scheme has been approved by the Scottish Information Commissioner, who is responsible for enforcing FOISA. We are also obliged to review this scheme from time to time.

The purpose of the scheme is to provide you with details of the range of information that we routinely publish. The scheme also provides details of how you can access this information, and tells you whether it is available free, or if there is a charge for the information.

Alongside FOISA, the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (the EIRs) provide a separate right of access to the environmental information that we hold. This publication scheme also contains details of the environmental information that we routinely make available.

Where information is not published under this scheme, you can request it from us under FOISA or, in the case of environmental information, the EIRs. For further information on accessing information not covered by this scheme, refer to *Section 11 – How to access information not available under the scheme*.

## **SECTION 2 : ABOUT SCOTTISH PUBLIC PENSION AGENCY**

The Scottish Public Pensions Agency is an Agency of the Scottish Government. It was previously known as the Scottish Office Pensions Agency which was created on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1993 and employs around 200 staff. The Agency administers and regulates the NHS and teachers' pension schemes in Scotland, and other occupational pension schemes for which the Scottish Government is responsible. It also regulates the local government, police and fire pension schemes administered by Scottish local authorities. The overall framework within which it operates is set out in its Framework Document.

The aims of SPPA, as set out in its Framework Document, are as follows:

- to administer, on behalf of the Scottish Government the public service pension, premature retirement compensation and injury benefit schemes for which the Scottish Ministers have administrative responsibility so as to provide an efficient and effective service for the benefit of those who use the schemes, at an economic cost to the public purse;
- to prepare in accordance with the Scottish Government's policy the regulations governing these and other schemes for which the Scottish Ministers have regulatory responsibility;
- to determine questions under the regulations on which there is a right of appeal to Scottish Ministers; and

- to advise the Scottish Ministers on occupational pensions policy generally.

SPPA's key objectives are:

- to provide a timely, accurate and helpful service to members of the schemes administered by the SPPA and their employers, in line with the principles of putting our customer first;
- to collect and pay, promptly and accurately, sums due under these schemes, and to arrange for their proper accounting and budgeting;
- to publicise, timely and accurately, information about changes to scheme policies and regulations to local authorities and other bodies administering schemes regulated by the SPPA;
- to reduce, over time, the ratio of running costs to case-load; and
- to provide appropriate policy advice to Ministers and Departments of the Scottish Government on their pensions responsibilities generally and to regulate and develop the schemes for which they are responsible in accordance with the Scottish Government's policies.

The schemes administered and regulated by SPPA are the pensions, premature retirements compensation and injury schemes covering employees of the National Health Service in Scotland (some 270,000 members and beneficiaries) and the pension scheme covering Teachers in Scotland (some 150,000 members and beneficiaries), the scheme covering staff of the Legal Aid Board for Scotland (covering some 200 members and beneficiaries), the scheme for members of the Northern Ireland Assembly, the pension scheme covering the members of the Scottish Parliament (some 130 members and beneficiaries) and the now discontinued "Crombie" compensation scheme covering former employees of colleges of education (covering some 600 beneficiaries).

SPPA also exercises regulatory and appellate functions in respect of schemes administered by local authorities - the local government pension and compensation for premature retirement schemes, the teacher's compensation for premature retirement scheme, and the pension schemes covering the police and fire services.

### **SECTION 3: PREPARING THE PUBLICATION SCHEME**

When preparing or reviewing our publication scheme, we are obliged by FOISA to have due regard to the public interest in providing access to the information that we hold which relates to:

- the services we provide;
- the costs of those services;
- the standard of those services;
- the facts that inform the important decisions we take; and
- the reasoning that informs our decisions.

In preparing this publication scheme Scottish Public Pension Agency has identified and listed for publication under this scheme all material which would be of public interest as suggested above.

The Agency, in particular, has ensured that information about the decision making process, performance and levels of activity are included within this publication scheme. SPPA appreciates that such information is in the public interest.

#### **SECTION 4 : ACCESSING INFORMATION UNDER THE SCHEME**

Information available under our publication scheme will normally be available through the routes described below. *Section 12 – Classes of Information* provides more details on the information available under the scheme, along with additional guidance on how the information falling within each “class” may be accessed.

##### ***Online:***

Most information listed in our publication scheme is available to download from our website. In many cases a link within *Section 12: Classes of Information* will direct you to the relevant page or document. Where no such link is present, you can use our website’s “Search” facility at <http://www.sppa.gov.uk/> If you are still having trouble finding any document listed under our scheme, then please call –

- Telephone.. ....01896 893200
- Postal address ...Ian Clapperton  
Director of Operations  
7 Tweedside Park  
Tweedbank  
Galashiels  
Scottish Borders  
TD1 3TE

for further assistance.

##### ***By email:***

If the information you seek is listed in our publication scheme but is not published on our website, we can send it to you by email, wherever possible. When requesting information from us, please provide a telephone number so that we can telephone you to clarify details, if necessary. You can email –

- Ian.clapperton@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

##### ***By phone:***

Information can also be requested from us over the telephone. Please call –

- Enquiry line ...01896 893200
- Postal address ...Ian Clapperton  
Director of Operations  
7 Tweedside Park  
Tweedbank  
Galashiels  
Scottish Borders  
TD1 3TE

***By post:***

All information under the scheme will normally be available in paper copy form. Please address your request to –

- Postal address ...Ian Clapperton  
Director of Operations  
7 Tweedside Park  
Tweedbank  
Galashiels  
Scottish Borders  
TD1 3TE

When writing to us to request information, please include your name and address, full details of the information or documents you would like to receive, and any fee applicable (see *Section 6: Our Charging Policy* for further information on fees). Please also include a telephone number so we can telephone you to clarify any details, if necessary.

***Advice and assistance:***

If you have any difficulty identifying the information you want to access, then please contact

- Enquiry line ...01896 893200
- Postal address ...Ian Clapperton  
Director of Operations  
7 Tweedside Park  
Tweedbank  
Galashiels  
Scottish Borders  
TD1 3TE

who will be happy to help.

**SECTION 5 : INFORMATION THAT WE MAY WITHHOLD**

All information covered by our publication scheme can either be accessed through our website, or will be provided promptly following our receipt of your request.

Our aim in maintaining this publication scheme is to be as open as possible. You should note, however, that there may be limited circumstances where information will be withheld from one of the classes of information listed in *Section 12 – Classes of Information*. Information will only be withheld, however, where FOISA (or, in the case of environmental information, the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004) expressly permits it.

Information may be withheld, for example, where its disclosure would breach the law of confidentiality, harm an organisation's commercial interests, or endanger the protection of the environment. Information may also be withheld if it is another person's personal information, and its release would breach the data protection legislation.

Whenever information is withheld we will inform you of this, and will set out why that information cannot be released. Even where information is withheld it may, in many cases, be possible to provide copies with the withheld information edited out.

If you wish to complain about any information which has been withheld from you, please refer to *Section 10 – Complaints*.

## **SECTION 6 : OUR CHARGING POLICY**

All information contained within our scheme is available from us free of charge where it can be downloaded from our website or where it can be sent to you electronically by email.

We reserve the right to impose charges for providing information in paper copy or on computer disc. Charges will reflect the actual costs of reproduction and postage to the authority, as set out below.

In the event that a charge is to be levied, you will be advised of the charge and how it has been calculated. Information will not be provided to you until payment has been received.

### ***Reproduction costs:***

Where charges are applied, photocopied information will be charged at a standard rate of 10p per A4 side of paper (black and white copy) and 30p per A4 side of paper (colour copy).

Computer discs will be charged at the rate of £1.00 per CD-Rom.

### ***Postage cost:***

We will pass on postage charges to the requester at the cost to the authority of sending the information by first class post.

## **SECTION 7 : OUR COPYRIGHT POLICY**

The Scottish Public Pension Agency is a Crown body and the information we produce is subject to Crown copyright, which is administered by the Queen's Printer for Scotland. The material listed in this publication scheme is Crown copyright unless stated otherwise. The copyright in some of the material which may be found in this publication scheme has been waived. This means that you can re-use this material freely. Categories of material for which copyright has been waived include: press notices, legislation, and explanatory notes on the legislation, ministerial speeches, consultation documents, documents featured on official websites (except where expressly indicated otherwise), headline statistics and unpublished public records. More details of these and other categories can be found at: <http://www.oqps.gov.uk>

For other types of material, the supply of documents under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) does not give the person or organisation who receives them an automatic right to re-use the documents in a way that would infringe copyright, for example, by making multiple copies, publishing and issuing copies to the public.

Brief extracts of any of the material included in this publication scheme may be reproduced under the fair dealing provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act 1988 (sections 29

and 30) for the purposes of research and non-commercial purposes, private study, criticism, review and new reporting.

Details of the arrangements for re-using Crown copyright material can be found on the website of the Office of Public Sector Information at <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/click-use/index.htm>

Authorisation to re-use copyright material not owned by the Crown should be sought from the copyright holders concerned.”

## **SECTION 8 : OUR RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND DISPOSAL POLICY**

The Scottish Public Pension Agency adheres to the records management and disposal policy of the Scottish Government. The guidance and instructions may be accessed on the Scottish Government web site at [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/Recent](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/Recent).

## **SECTION 9: FEEDBACK**

FOISA requires that we review our publication scheme from time to time. As a result, we welcome feedback on how we can develop our scheme further. If you would to comment on any aspect of this publication scheme, then please contact us. You may, for example wish to tell us about:

- other information that you would like to see included in the scheme;
- whether you found the scheme easy to use;
- whether you found the publication scheme useful;
- whether our staff were helpful;
- other ways in which our publication scheme can be improved.

Please send any comments or suggestions to –

- Postal address ... Ian Clapperton  
Director of Operations  
7 Tweedside Park  
Tweedbank  
Galashiels  
Scottish Borders  
TD1 3TE

## **SECTION 10: COMPLAINTS**

Our aim is to make our publication scheme as user-friendly as possible, and we hope that you can access all the information we publish with ease. If you do wish to complain about any aspect of the publication scheme, however, then please contact us, and we will try and resolve your complaint as quickly as possible. You can contact:

- Postal address ... Ian Clapperton  
Director of Operations  
7 Tweedside Park  
Tweedbank

Galashiels  
Scottish Borders  
TD1 3TE

Any complaint will be acknowledged within two working days of receipt and we will respond in full within twenty working days.

You have legal rights to access information under this scheme and a right of appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner if you are dissatisfied with our response. These rights apply only to information requests made in writing\* or another recordable format. If you are unhappy with our responses to your request you can ask us to review it and if you are still unhappy, you can make an appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner.

The Commissioner's website has a guide to this three step process, and he operates an enquiry service on Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 5:00pm. His office can be contacted as follows:

**Scottish Information Commissioner**

Kinburn Castle  
Doubledykes Road  
St Andrews  
Fife  
KY16 9DS

Tel: 01334 464610  
Email: [enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info)  
Website: [www.itspublicknowledge.info](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info)

\*verbal requests for environmental information carry similar rights.

**SECTION 11 : HOW TO ACCESS INFORMATION WHICH IS NOT AVAILABLE  
UNDER THIS SCHEME**

If the information you are seeking is not available under this publication scheme, then you may wish to request it from us. The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) provides you with a right of access to the information we hold, subject to certain exemptions. The Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs) separately provide a right of access to the environmental information we hold, while the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) provides a right of access to any personal information about you that we hold. Again, these rights are subject to certain exceptions or exemptions.

Should you wish to request a copy of any information that we hold that is not available under this scheme, please write to –

- Postal address ... Ian Clapperton  
Director of Operations  
7 Tweedside Park  
Tweedbank  
Galashiels  
Scottish Borders TD1 3TE

***Charges for information which is not available under the scheme:***

The charges for information which *is* available under this scheme are set out under section 6 – Our Charging Policy. If you submit a request to us for information which *is not* available under the scheme the charges will be based on the following calculations:

*General information requests:*

- There will be no charge for information requests which cost us £100 or less to process.
- Where information costs between £100 and £600 to provide you may be asked to pay 10% of the cost. That is, if you were to ask for information that cost us £600 to provide, you would be asked to pay £50, that calculated on the basis of a waiver for the first £100 and 10% of the remaining £500.
- We are not obliged to respond to requests which will cost us over £600 to process.
- In calculating any fee, staff time will be calculated at actual cost per staff member hourly salary rate to a maximum of £15 per person per hour.
- We do not charge for the time to determine whether we hold the information requested, nor for the time it takes to decide whether the information can be released. Charges may be made for locating, retrieving and providing information to you.
- In the event that we decide to impose a charge we will issue you with notification of the charge (a fees notice) and how it has been calculated. You will have three months from the date of issue of the fees notice in which to decide whether to pay the charge. The information will be provided to you on payment of the charge. If you decide not to proceed with the request there will be no charge to you.

*Charges for environmental information:*

We do not charge for the time to determine whether we hold the information requested, nor for the time it takes to decide whether the information can be released. Charges may be made for locating, retrieving and providing information to you.

In the event that we decide to impose a charge we will issue you with notification of the charge and how it has been calculated. The information will be provided to you on payment of the charge. If you decide not to proceed with the request there will be no charge to you.

Charges are calculated on the basis of the actual cost to the authority of providing the information.

- Photocopying is charged at 10p per A4 sheet for black and white copying, 30p per A4 sheet for colour copying.
- Postage is charged at actual rate for first class mail.
- Staff time is calculated at actual cost per staff member hourly salary rate to a maximum of £15 per person per hour.

The first £100 worth of information will be provided to you without charge.

Where information costs between £100 and £600 to provide you will be asked to pay 10% of the cost. That is, if you were to ask for information that cost us £600 to provide, you would be asked to pay £50, that calculated on the basis of a waiver for the first £100 and 10% of the remaining £500.

Where it would cost more than £600 to provide the information to you, however, we will ask

you to pay the full cost of providing the information, with no waiver for any portion of the cost.

## **SECTION 12 : CLASSES OF INFORMATION**

Listed below are the classes of information which the Scottish Public Pension Agency publishes or intends to publish. All information under these classes are [except where indicated] available on request.

### **Classes [description of each class]**

#### **Class – who we are and what we do**

- **Organisation**

*[breakdown of our current structure, areas of responsibility and contact information]*

- details of who is who
- roles and responsibilities
- chart
- contact numbers

- **Decision making**

*[minutes of management board meetings at which all aspects of Agency business is discussed and decisions made on future activities]*

- management board minutes

- **Planning**

*[information relating to the SPPA short and long-term plans which are reviewed annually and our key aims and objectives]*

- three year corporate plan
- annual business plan
- framework document [responsibilities of the Agency]

- **Public appointments**

*[information about the membership of the External Management Board]*

- board membership

## **Class – Financial information**

- **Actual income and expenditure**

*[information about the Agency spending as detailed in annual accounts for each year from 2003]*

- annual budget
- budgetary reviews
- staff allowances and expenses [summary]
- workforce payments [summary]

- **Annual financial reports**

*[information about the Agency and NHS & Teacher pension schemes financial position and actuarial valuations]*

- annual accounts from 2003
- annual reports of pension schemes from 2002
- pension scheme valuations from 1999

- **Procurement and contracts**

*[information about activity in contract procurement in SPPA as shown in annual accounts]*

- summary of contracts awarded and managed by SPPA

## **Class – strategies and performance**

- **Performance reviews**

*[reports of SPPA performance as demonstrated by independent audit, stakeholder opinion and level of activity in dispute cases]*

- minutes of audit committee
- stakeholder survey results
- appeals and determinations [activity]

## **Class – communications and publications**

- **Formal publications**

*[information routinely provided by SPPA to pension scheme members and employers]*

- members guides
- circulars about the scheme
- forms available for use by members

- examples of frequently asked questions
  - links to HMSO, etc
  - general membership statistical data
  - employer guides
- **Public consultations**

*[information about pension scheme consultations with background information, regulatory explanations where appropriate and summaries of comments where sufficient responses have been received]*

    - consultation documents and background
    - consultation summaries of comments [if prepared]

### **Class - Policies, procedures and internal guidance**

- **Human Resources**

*[information[on the SPPA website] relating to the SPPA personnel, training and accommodation functions  
Note – The Agency adopts the personnel policies of the Scottish Government and has not introduced separate arrangements]*

  - responsibilities of the Agency
- **Service standards and complaint policy**

*[information about our standards, what we expect of customers and how to complain about the service provided and what to do if you wish to dispute the decision on your pension application]*

  - member guidance
  - contact information
  - internal dispute resolution procedure guide
  - unacceptable customer behaviour
- **Finance**

*[details [on the SPPA website] of the current SPPA finance procedures]*

  - responsibilities
  - Agency policies
  - charging policy and rates for specific services

- **Information Management**

*[details of the role of the Information Systems Unit who handle IT functions available to the Agency]*

*Note – SPPA adopts the Scottish Government policies covering data protection, freedom of information, data retention and codes of conduct]*

- role of Information Systems Unit

- **Environmental information**

*[explanation of the Agency approach and objectives]*

- Agency policy on environmental issues
- Agency progress relating to environmental targets

### **Class – lists and registers**

- **Risk register**

*[risks and countermeasures considered by SPPA and re-produced in the Agency corporate plan and annual business plan]*

- risk log

- **Asset register**

*[assets of SPPA as detailed in the Agency annual reports from 2003]*

- asset register

### **Class - Regulatory functions**

- **Policy**

*[explanation of the role of the policy team, their responsibilities to the Scottish Government and their regulatory functions]*

- details of the role of the Policy Directorate in SPPA
- regulatory functions for -
  - NHS
  - SSTS
  - police and fire schemes
  - LGPS
  - Scottish Parliamentary and Northern Ireland Assembly