Scottish Information Commissioner
www.itspublicknowledge.info

Public Services Reform Act 2010 – "definition of public relations"

Internal guidance note

About PRSA reports

1. Section 31 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (PSRA) requires we publish information on "certain expenditure" each year. Our annual reports can be viewed at: http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/home/AboutSIC/Governance/StatutoryReporting.aspx

2. The data the reports contain is gathered from a range of sources, including a monthly monitor of activity falling within the category of "public relations", as listed in the PSRA. This note provides guidance on completion of the monthly "public relations" monitoring form.

Definition of "public relations"

3. As the Scottish Government's Guidance on PSRA reporting explains. "public relations" is to be construed widely:

    15. *The statement of expenditure on public relations should state the total amount of expenditure during the relevant financial year on all external communications, including the cost of in-house and contracted staff and consultants. Expenditure on 'public relations' includes (for example) marketing, PR campaigns, media relations, marketing research and evaluation, branding and design, promotional events, external events, conferences and exhibitions, corporate communications, sponsorship, publications and printing, digital communications, advertising and media planning.*

    16. *The statement should include expenditure on external communications relating to the services which the public body provides, such as promoting tourism in the case of Visit Scotland. It is not necessary to include expenditure which relates only to internal communications, such as staff newsletters, or to recruitment advertising.*

4. Our work on promoting rights and good practice is likely to include some "public relations" elements, but not all of our work in these areas falls within the above definition. You will need to refer closely to the above guidance and consider your work on a case by case basis to form a view of your own activities in the last month.

5. The following table provides examples to guide decisions about the time you have spent on activities in scope.

Activities likely to be in scope of "public relations"	Activities unlikely to be in scope of "public relations"
• Drafting and issuing any external communications e.g. promoting reports and events, newsletters (including decision learning points summaries for the newsletter), , guidance on good practice/FOI	• Preparing and editing the internal DRU • Drafting the content of a report or guidance (that a communication is about) • Preparing statistics (unless they are about evaluation of a communication) • Internal bulletin
• Writing the design, promotional, research, photography, website design brief for an external contractor relating to work on external communications.	• Preparing other aspects of an invitation to tender / invitation to quote relating to work on external communications e.g., delivery timescales, payment of invoices, contracting with the SIC
• Time spent with an external contractor relating to work on external communications to discuss visual, presentational and message elements	• Managing other aspects of a contract relating to work on external communications e.g., payment of invoices, consultation on RFIs relating to the contract.
• Practical arrangements: contracting with the venue, developing the programme and briefings for colleagues • Liaison with partner organisations about dates, venues, content for an event. • Drafting and issuing invitations to attend an event	
• Delivering content at a roadshow or other external event, delivering best practice or rights advice at an event • Preparing presentations	• Time spent at an event where you are in the audience • Preparing / developing learning materials and guidance that a presentation may be about
• Delivering content to a sector group meeting	• Representing the SIC at a meeting
• Preparing an evaluation form and compiling evaluation data, analysis of evaluation data	• Drafting other content in a committee report accompanying evaluation data e.g., risk and resource sections
• Collating information for an information stall, staffing an information stall	• Networking at an event.
• Working on new website content	• Maintaining existing website content • Website contract management, sending requests for website support.

Document control sheet

Document Information	
Full name of current version: Class, Title, Version No and Status. *E.g. C5 Key Documents Handbook v01 CURRENT ISSUE*	C7 Public Service Reform Act 2010 definition of "public relations" – internal guidance note v03 CURRENT ISSUE
VC FileId	185654
Type	Procedure
Approver	SMT
Responsible Manager	HOCS
Date of next planned review	April 2025
Approval & Publication	
Approval Date (major version)	11/04/2023
For publication *(Y/N)*	Y
Date published	20/04/2023
Name of document in website file library	PSRAinternalguidance
Corrections / Unplanned or Ad hoc reviews (see Summary of changes below for details)	
Date of last update	

Summary of changes to document				
Date	**Action by** *(initials)*	**Version updated** *(e.g. v01.25-36)*	**New version number** *(e.g. v01.27, or 02.03)*	**Brief description** *(e.g. updated paras 1-8, updated HOPI to HOCS, reviewed whole section on PI test, whole document updated, corrected typos, reformatted to new branding)*
20/04/23	BOW	03.00	03.01	New document created following approval of draft
20/04/23	BOW	03.01	03.02	DCS updated, published on website