

Service Standards

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1. Background to OSCR and our values

The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) is a non-Ministerial Department, independent from Scottish Ministers and forms part of the Scottish administration.

We believe our values are critical to our service delivery and underpin our Customer Service Standards. We have formulated our values drawing on the principles of regulation developed by the Better Regulation Task Force. We believe it is critical that OSCR demonstrates these values which we identify as being:

Independent: *we maintain our operational independence, acting without fear or favour, in the public interest*

Proportionate: *our actions as a regulator are appropriate and necessary taking into account the degree of risk, size of charity, the nature of the issues to be addressed and the potential impact on charity beneficiaries or assets or the public interest.*

Accountable: *we are answerable, in different ways, to our stakeholders which includes involving others on a continuous and appropriate basis, demonstrating our impact, providing value for money and welcoming external scrutiny.*

Transparent: *we act in a way that is open, predictable and understandable. This includes making available the relevant criteria and facts underpinning our actions.*

Consistent: *we act consistently in our decision making on the basis of publicly stated principles and policies and act as an exemplar, observing best practice.*

Fair: *we exercise our powers and discretion in a way which is consistent, impartial and even-handed.*

Targeted: *our regulatory activities are clearly focused on the basis of evidence and we act in such a way as to minimise any negative consequence.*

Informed: *we gather adequate information from the appropriate sources to ensure that our actions are properly informed.*

2. Our service standards

Calls

We will be available to answer calls between the hours of 9am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday and excluding Bank Holidays.

We will answer your calls promptly, courteously and identify ourselves clearly. If you wish to speak to someone who is not available or we are unable to answer the enquiry at that time we will take a message and arrange for a suitable person to call you back.

General Correspondence

We will endeavour to respond to general written correspondence within fifteen working days of receipt of your letter or e-mail. If we are unable to respond in full within this timescale we will write to you advising of the time it will take to respond in full.

All correspondence generated by us will be on OSCR headed note paper, and will be dated and signed by an appropriate member of staff.

Visitors

If you visit our office you will be seen at the time of any pre-arranged appointment.

If you visit our office wishing to speak to one of our staff, but have no formal appointment, whilst we will endeavour to assist you, we cannot guarantee that someone will be able to meet you. In such circumstances, an appointment for a subsequent date will be made with you. In order to prevent wasted journeys, we recommend that you make an appointment by telephone prior to visiting our office.

Visits to a charity by OSCR investigators

The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 allows OSCR to make inquiries into:

- charities and other bodies such as those controlled by a charity or charities;
- or any that represent themselves as charities while not on the Register.

The powers to make such enquiries are contained in Sections 28 and 29 of the Act. An inquiry may be made either generally or for a particular purpose.

As far as possible, OSCR Investigations staff will arrange to visit you at a mutually convenient time and venue. At the start of the visit, OSCR staff member(s) will identify themselves clearly, and provide you with one of their business cards.

OSCR officer(s) will outline why the visit has been arranged and the matters for discussion. The meeting will conclude with the OSCR officer(s) briefly summarising the key points from the discussion, and outlining any recommendations/actions agreed. Information on what OSCR proposes to do next will be provided where possible and appropriate.

3. Complaints and Compliments

Customer feedback – both positive and negative - on the quality of service you have received from us is welcomed, and is used to assess and review the effectiveness of our current procedures and processes for dealing with the public.

If you wish to comment on any aspect of the service you have received from OSCR staff, please complete the attached Comments Form, or write to:

Judith Hayhow
Head of Corporate Services
2nd Floor
Quadrant House
9 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

info@oscr.org.uk

When the comment is a complaint it will be acknowledged within three working days of receipt, and then passed to the Head of Corporate Services for consideration. The Head of Corporate Services will ensure you receive a response within 15 working days of acknowledgement, unless circumstances dictate that the matters raised cannot be dealt with within that time scale. Should this be the case, you will be advised in writing of when you can expect to hear from us.

If you are unhappy with the response you receive from our Head of Corporate Services, you should write to: David Robb, Chief Executive, at the address above.

Your correspondence will be acknowledged and responded to within 15 working days where possible.

Further right of appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

There is no further appeal within OSCR. If you remain dissatisfied you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to consider your complaint. Generally, you have a period of one year to send your complaint to the Ombudsman from when it happened or from when you found out about the matter.

Contact details:

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
4 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7NS
0800 377 7330

www.spsso.org.uk

All complaints are recorded by us, and the statistics will be published on our website on a monthly basis.

4. Requests under Freedom on Information

OSCR is committed to carrying out its activities in an open and transparent manner and has adopted a Freedom of Information culture from the outset. Information about OSCR is available online at www.oscr.org.uk and all the information we publish is listed in our Publication Scheme which is updated on a monthly basis.

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act commenced on 1st January 2005 and entitles individuals to see information from public authorities or other organisations that provide services for them. The Act sets a limit of 20 days for public authorities to respond to requests for information made by an individual. The Act also states that a member of the public may request a review of that response within 40 days of receipt. If after review by the public authority, they remain dissatisfied, they can then lodge an appeal with the Scottish Information Commissioner. Full details of the FOI Act are available on the website of the Scottish Information Commissioner, at www.itspublicknowledge.info

The effective regulation of charities requires OSCR to make inquiries into the running of Scottish charities. While OSCR aims to be as open and transparent as possible in our operations, there are legitimate exemptions contained in the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 which enable information to be withheld.

OSCR may lawfully withhold information in order to ensure the effectiveness of the investigatory process. This withholding of information may be particularly relevant to the following categories of information:

- Witness statements provided to OSCR in confidence
- Correspondence to/from a charity during an ongoing investigation into that charity
- Correspondence to/from a complainer during an ongoing investigation
- Internal file notes, memos and reports relating to an ongoing investigation

5. Consultation with Stakeholders

OSCR is committed to consulting and engaging with our stakeholders in the development and delivery of our policies, procedures and functions. Our Consultation and Participation Strategy sets out the manner in which we will achieve this, and copies of the strategy are available on the website, www.oscr.org.uk or by post on request. Feedback on the strategy and its delivery is welcomed and should be made on standard OSCR Comments form available at the end of this document.

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6. OSCR Service Standards Comments Form

Section 1: Your details

Your Name

Contact address

Telephone number

E-mail

Section 2: Your comments

Please use the Box below to outline your comments on the standard of service you have received from OSCR staff. Please supply as much detail as possible in your comment e.g. Dates, times and names of people you have contacted, continuing on another sheet if necessary.

Signature

Date

Internal use only: Acknowledged: Response..... Initials.....