

**Corporate Plan  
2014-2017**

**Scottish Charity Regulator**

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# About Us

## WHO WE ARE

**The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) is responsible for the registration and regulation of all of Scotland's 23,800 charities.**

**These charities form a diverse group which are based and operate throughout Scotland and include community groups, religious charities, schools, universities, museums, grant giving charities and major care providers.**

We are a Non-Ministerial Department and were established in 2006 by the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. We operate independently of Ministerial influence or control, with strategic direction being provided by our board of eight members. The board is accountable directly to the Scottish Parliament, to whom we report annually. Our Chief Executive is the Accountable Officer and also manages day to day operations, relating to the delivery of our statutory duties, which are:

- 1.** To determine whether bodies are charities
- 2.** To keep a public register of charities
- 3.** To encourage, facilitate and monitor compliance by charities with the 2005 Act
- 4.** To identify and investigate apparent misconduct in charities, taking remedial or protective action as appropriate
- 5.** To give information or advice to the Scottish Ministers on matters relating to OSCR's functions

We operate from a single office in Dundee and employ 55 staff, all of whom are civil servants. Our funding is allocated annually through the Scottish Budget Act, and our relationship to the Scottish Government is set out in a **Framework Agreement**.

## WHAT WE DO

We maintain and publish an online register of accurate information relating to each of Scotland's 23,800 charities. It is updated every working day to provide the public with accurate information on all Scottish charities.

Each month, we consider approximately 110 new applications for charitable status and we also consider approximately 90 applications from charities to make constitutional changes or re-organise.

To monitor compliance, we analyse and review information and accounts submitted to us by every Scottish charity. We also receive and consider approximately 25 concerns each month about charities' operations or governance.

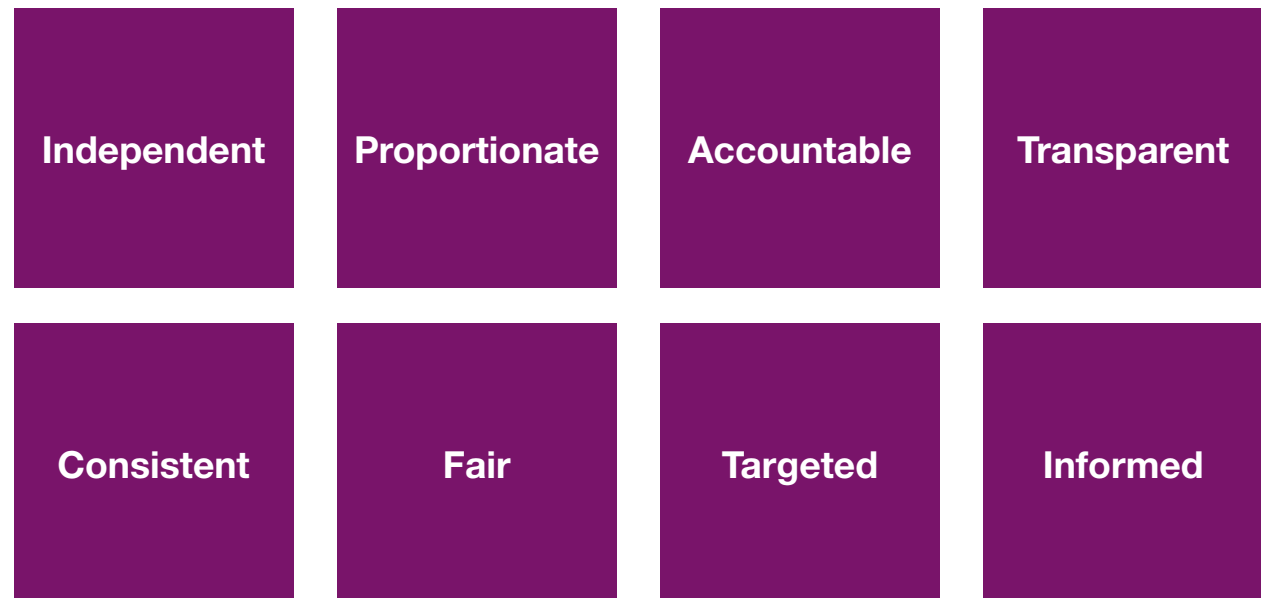
## OUR VISION AND VALUES

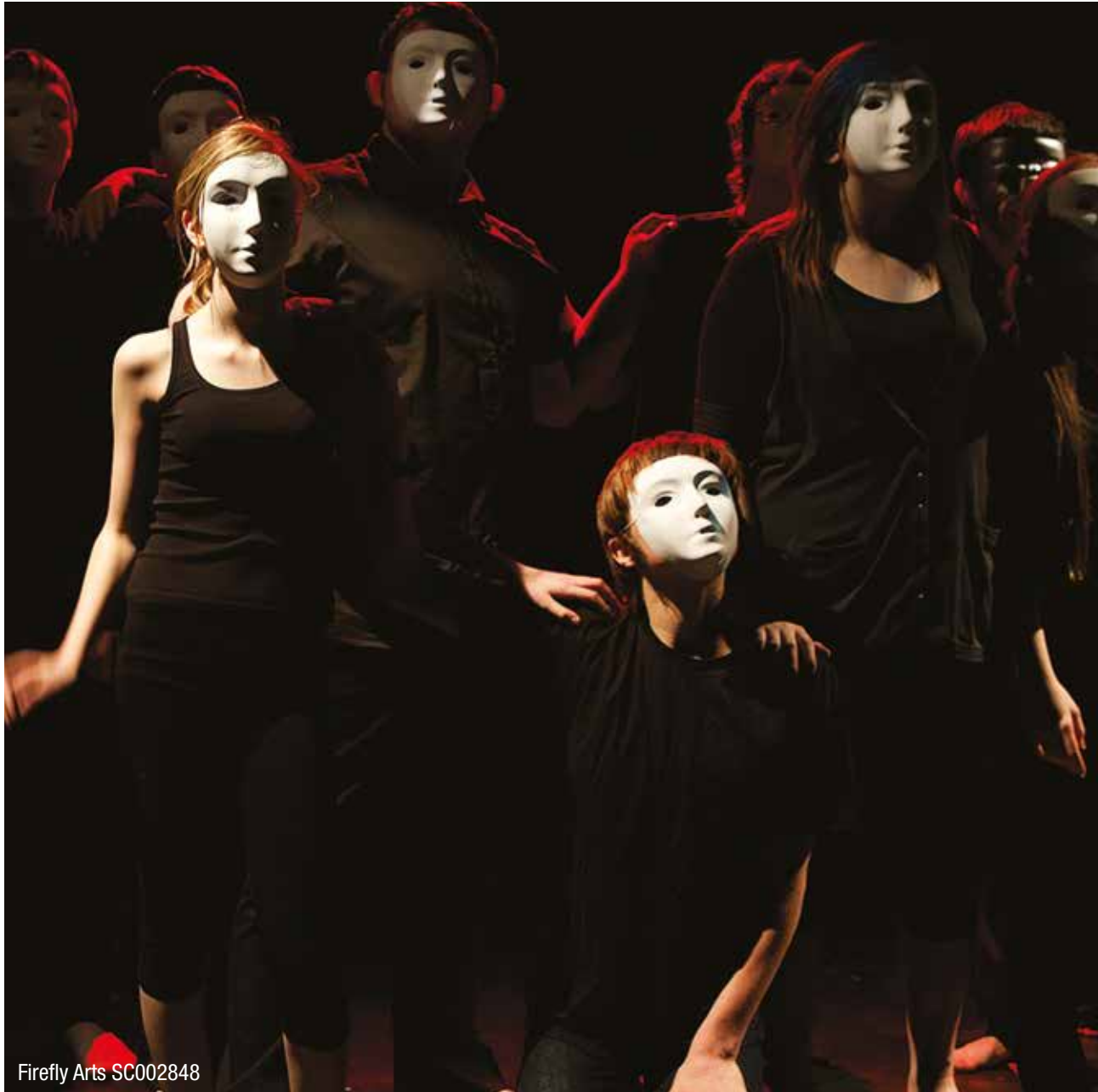
As Scotland's charity regulator, our vision is of:

***charities you can trust and that provide public benefit.***

Our focus during this Corporate Plan period is on developing our regulatory approach and the services we deliver as a light-touch, progressive regulator, to ensure that we maintain public focus whilst providing support and encouragement to the enormous number of people who, as trustees, act as stewards of Scotland's charities. In doing this, we will promote transparency and good governance by charities and protect the public's interest in the integrity of charity.

How well we achieve this will be influenced by how we communicate and interact with all our stakeholders. In order to provide a high level of service, each of us working at OSCR will uphold our regulatory principles and values, and ensure that our activities are:





## SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The Scottish Government's purpose is to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. **The National Performance Framework** sets out how the Scottish Government and other delivery partners will achieve and measure the purpose, and details 16 national outcomes and 50 national indicators. Our work as registrar and regulator of charities aligns to many of these objectives, and our work during the life of this Corporate Plan will contribute both directly and indirectly to the delivery of many of the national outcomes, most specifically to the following:

- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society (Outcome 7)
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others (Outcome 11)
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient, and responsive to people's needs (Outcome 15)

## THE NATIONAL OPERATING CONTEXT

In 2016, OSCR will have operated as charity registrar and regulator for 10 years. The environment in which we and charities operate has changed considerably during that period as have expectations of the nature and delivery method for the services we provide.

**Legislative change** – Each year, we use our Annual Report to make general recommendations to Scottish Ministers, primarily to support delivery of our strategic objectives, and to address unintended consequences, confusion or lack of consistency in the 2005 Act. The tenth anniversary of the Act in 2015 would be a sensible time to evaluate the effectiveness of the current legislative framework and the work of the Scottish Charity Regulator over the period.

The recently passed Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 requires regulators to align activities and approaches to ensure that activities contribute to delivery of sustainable economic growth. We have a number of formal working protocols with a range of public bodies, and will work with them to identify opportunities for better alignment of activities. We will continue to work and share best practice with other charity regulators based within the United Kingdom and Ireland, and with other charity regulators working internationally.

**Political** – The Referendum on whether Scotland should be an independent country will take place in September 2014. We recognise that for some charities constitutional change may affect their work. Charity regulation is already devolved, and we welcome the reassurances provided in the **White Paper** that a future Scottish Government led by the SNP would continue with a broadly similar framework for charity regulation. During the life of this Corporate Plan there will also be a UK General Election in 2015, and Scottish Parliament elections in 2016. Changes to both administrations, and to policies in respect of public and third sector funding and priorities are therefore possible, and we acknowledge that this plan is set within the context of some political uncertainty for charities and ourselves.

**Technology** – We are committed to taking full advantage of technological advances in ICT so that we can move our transactional processes online, giving charities and the wider public an improved service, and delivering operating efficiencies.

**Corporate** – Our streamlined corporate structure was implemented in October 2012, and included the enhancement of the Engagement Team, whose remit is to promote and facilitate good governance and to lead dialogue with the sector and its advisors. During the 2014-17 period, we will continue to work to become a more outward facing and engaged regulator, working with charities to ensure that they understand their responsibilities and have the skills required to operate effectively.

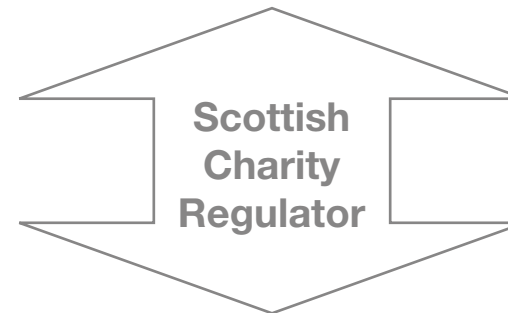
**Targeted Regulation** – To maximise operational efficiency and value for money, we plan to change the way in which we monitor charities by focusing resources on those priority areas we believe require our attention, and by minimising reporting requirements for compliant charities.

# OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2014-17

Following consultation with stakeholders, we are setting four strategic objectives for the 2014-17 period, and we have identified criteria we will use to monitor our delivery of these.

The diagram shows the connection between these objectives and our statutory duties, and will inform the development of an annual Business Plan. As is shown, the interdependencies associated with our work mean that some objectives contribute to the delivery of more than one statutory duty.

## Strategic Objectives 2014-17



## Statutory Functions



# PRIORITY ACTIONS AND MEASURING THE IMPACT OF WHAT WE DO

So that we can identify clearly how successful we are at implementing our objectives, the following table details what success would look like at the end of the plan period, and the specific measures we will use to monitor progress during the 2014-17 period:

	What success would look like	How we'll measure success
<p><b>Strategic Aim 1</b> Help the public to have more confidence in charities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being an effective regulator</li> <li>- Making it easier for the public to get the information they want about charities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OSCR Surveys would show an increase in public confidence in charities (Baseline 2014 survey)</li> <li>- More accessible information about charities is available on the Scottish Charity Register</li> <li>- We publish reports on our inquiries as widely as possible, with lessons learned</li> <li>- We have changed the way we work to focus on charities that involve particular regulatory challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We will run bi-annual surveys</li> <li>- We will publish more information about charities on our Register and our website</li> <li>- We will publish case studies and inquiry reports on our website</li> <li>- Our new annual reporting and compliance monitoring framework will be implemented</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Aim 2</b> Help charity trustees to understand and comply with their legal duties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More charities send us their accounts when they're supposed to</li> <li>- More applications for charitable status result in a definite decision</li> <li>- Fewer people complain to us about charities in the first 18 months of registration</li> <li>- Our guidance is easier to understand, and people tell us so</li> <li>- We work together more with other organisations who help or regulate charities</li> <li>- We have stronger and more effective relationships with organisations that guide and support charitable organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The number of charities which don't submit annual returns and accounts to us will have gone down</li> <li>- Fewer applications for charitable status will be closed or withdrawn by the applicants without a decision</li> <li>- We get fewer complaints about charities within the first 18 months of their being registered</li> <li>- Consultations and feedback on new guidance from the public and charities tell us it's easier to understand than the previous guidance</li> </ul>

# PRIORITY ACTIONS AND MEASURING THE IMPACT OF WHAT WE DO

## (continued)

	What success would look like	How we'll measure success
<p><b>Strategic Aim 3</b> Keep registration and reporting straightforward and proportionate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We decide more quickly whether or not an organisation can be a charity</li> <li>- Charities and the public can do more with OSCR online</li> <li>- More charities send us their accounts when they're supposed to</li> <li>- Charities are telling us they're happier with the way we deal with them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The average number of days we take to decide whether or not an organisation can be a charity goes down</li> <li>- We provide more services interactively online (for instance application for charitable status)</li> <li>- The number of charities which don't submit annual returns and accounts to us has gone down</li> <li>- Feedback in surveys and at events indicates that our services have improved</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Aim 4</b> Continually improve the way we operate and deliver services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We've updated and improved the quality of our services</li> <li>- When people complain about our services, fewer of these complaints are justified</li> <li>- Our activities meet the required Governance Standard for Public Services, as verified by audit</li> <li>- We will have reduced the environmental impact of our activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Performance targets</li> <li>- Feedback in surveys</li> <li>- We offer an increased range of digital services</li> <li>- Our accounts are unqualified</li> <li>- The number of service complaints we receive, that are justified, reduces</li> <li>- Our carbon emissions will reduce annually</li> <li>- Our staff engagement levels will remain high</li> </ul>



## RESOURCES

**People** – We recognise the vital role our staff play in taking on the challenge of improving outcomes, efficiency and the way we work. OSCR's staff are our primary resource and we are committed to their support and development. We want our staff to be proud to work for OSCR and will support them to do their job to the best of their ability by working flexibly and corporately.

We are a Bronze accredited Investor in People Organisation, and between 2014 and 2017 we will continue to provide all of the people who work for us with the skills they need to carry out their work, and engage with each other and with stakeholders, in a positive and constructive way.

**Money** – We are a Non-Ministerial Department, and appear as a separate entity in the Parliamentary Budget Bill. Our Annual Accounts are not consolidated, but are considered separately by the Auditor General, prior to being laid before Parliament.

As a publicly funded body, and in line with the situation being experienced by a significant number of public bodies in the 10-year period that we have been established, our annual budget has decreased by some 16%. Timing of the Comprehensive Spending Review and our corporate planning process means that we have a provisional financial allocation only for the first year of the corporate plan period. As a consequence, we may need to review the work programme during 2014/15. The table below provides an overview of our annual budget, with the period in respect of this plan being shaded.

Annual funding allocation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	£3.28m	£3.1m	£3.05m	£3.0m	TBC	TBC
Difference (from previous year)	-11%	-5%	-1.7%	-1.7%		

Our largest single expenditure is on staffing, with the annual staffing bill being just over £2.0m. The remainder of our funding is used to pay for our running costs and for capital investment. Most recently, this capital has been

spent on introducing and enhancing digital services for charities, and during the plan period, additional capital expenditure in this area, associated with the revisions to our annual monitoring of charities, will be required.

We have a responsibility to provide value for money, and we are committed to managing finances effectively. Over the last few years, operating with a reduced budget, we have had to consider the way we work to achieve our agreed priorities. This requirement will continue throughout this Corporate Plan period, and all of our activities will be carried out in the context of creating a more efficient, engaged and adaptable regulator.

## PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM

During this Corporate Plan period, as well as working to realise our vision of **charities you can trust and that provide public benefit**, we will be contributing to a number of wider public reform initiatives:

### Public Records Scotland Act 2011

We were one of the first bodies to have our Records Management Plan approved by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland and we will work to ensure our records management practices remain compliant.

### Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

Our FOI Publications scheme has been approved by the Scottish Information Commissioner, and we provide statistical information to them on a quarterly basis.

### Scotland's Digital Future: Public Services Central Government Strategy

We will work towards delivering our services digitally as the first option, wherever possible.

### Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Act 2014

We will abide by the new Code of Practice.

### The Scottish Government's Corporate Expectations of Public Bodies

Our work takes account of expectations in respect of public service reform, tackling youth employment, and fraud.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

We are committed to meeting our environmental responsibilities as a public body and adhere to environmental requirements in areas such as procurement, business travel and buildings management. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 is the key

driver for our improved environmental and sustainability performance and our **Carbon Management Plan (CMP) 2011-14** confirms our target of a 10% reduction in our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This is likely to continue during the 2014-17 period and is a realistic level given that we

are a relatively small organisation occupying a building already accredited as Very Good under the Buildings Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology. We report on our environmental impact in accordance with Public Service Reform Act requirements.



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