



Title: Freedom of Information (Scotland) - Group Policy

Business Function: All Functions across Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association

Authors: Legal Services

Other Contributors: Sanctuary Scotland

Authorised by: Executive Committee

Sanctuary Group:
Sanctuary Group is a trading name of Sanctuary Housing Association,
an exempt charity, and all of its subsidiaries.

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1. Policy statement

- 1.1 The [Freedom of Information \(Scotland\) Act 2002](#) (FOISA) means that everyone has a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association (Sanctuary Scotland) is a public authority for the purposes of the FOISA. It will hold information that will be the subject of requests pursuant to the FOISA. The FOISA places a number of obligations on public authorities in relation to accessing information held by them and the application of exemptions.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to support all staff in complying with the obligations imposed on Sanctuary Scotland by the FOISA and to ensure that Sanctuary Scotland maintains good practice in relation to freedom of information.
- 1.3 Sanctuary Scotland will be required under section 23 of the FOISA to adopt and maintain a publication scheme setting out the information it routinely makes available. The Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC) has produced a model publication scheme which Sanctuary Scotland has adopted.
- 1.4 The model publication scheme requires Sanctuary Scotland to publish the classes of information that they make routinely available and to tell the public how to access the information and what it might cost.
- 1.5 Sanctuary Scotland is fully committed to complying with the FOISA and has developed a policy and procedure to ensure that all requests made under the FOISA are handled in compliance with the FOISA. Further Sanctuary Scotland has ensured that all staff and contractors are fully aware of and comply with our duties under the FOISA.
- 1.6 Whilst the FOISA only applies to Sanctuary Scotland and activities that are regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator, it is important that staff across Sanctuary Group (the Group) understand the basic requirements of the FOISA. It is vital that all staff involved in the managing and handling of information falling within the classes of information covered in the model publication scheme are appropriately trained and supervised.
- 1.7 Failure to comply with the FOISA can lead to enforcement action by the SIC and could impact on the reputation of Sanctuary Scotland.
- 1.8 Any queries about the handling of requests made pursuant to the FOISA or the publication of information should be dealt with promptly. Legal Services should be consulted.
- 1.9 The FOISA does not relate to requests for personal data. These are to be dealt with in accordance with the [General Data Protection Regulations 2018](#) and the [Data Protection Act 2018](#) and in accordance with the [Data Protection - Group Policy and Procedure](#).

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 Group Directors and the Managing Director - Sanctuary Scotland are responsible for ensuring adoption of, and adherence to, this policy and its associated procedures relevant to their operation.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all staff within the Group. All staff are responsible for reading and complying with this policy and its procedure when dealing with information relating to Sanctuary Scotland and requests for information made under the FOISA.

3. References and sources

- [Freedom of Information \(Scotland\) Act 2002](#)
- [Freedom of information \(Scotland\) Act 2002 \(Designation of Persons as Scottish Public Authorities\) Order 2019](#)
- [Environmental Information \(Scotland\) Regulations 2004](#)
- [Model Publications Scheme and Guidance to Model Publications Scheme - Scottish Information Commissioner](#)
- [General Data Protection Regulations 2018](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Archiving - Group Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Disciplinary - Group Procedure](#)
- [Information Security - Group Policy](#) and [Information Security Management System Manual](#)
- [Data Protection - Group Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Content and Records Management - Group Policy and Procedure](#)

4. Impact on diversity

- 4.1 This policy applies to all functions across the Group which carry out work relating to the regulated activities of Sanctuary Scotland and is therefore relevant to all staff undertaking such work.
- 4.2 The Group demonstrates its commitment to diversity and promoting equality by ensuring that this policy is applied in a manner that is fair to all sections of the community, with due regard to the protected characteristics identified under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and in accordance with its '[Fairness for All](#)' Single Equality Scheme.

5. External consultation

- 5.1 There is no requirement for external consultation on this policy as it relates to the internal procedure for complying with freedom of information, the requirements for which are driven by legislation.

6. Monitoring and compliance

- 6.1 This policy is relevant to Sanctuary Scotland, but has Group wide implications. Ongoing compliance will be ensured by a close working relationship between Sanctuary Scotland and Legal Services.
- 6.2 Period of review
 - 6.2.1 Until a new policy is formally adopted this document will remain in force and operational.
 - 6.2.2 This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the policy review programme agreed by Executive Committee.
 - 6.2.3 If there are significant changes to legislation or regulation or there are found to be deficiencies or failures in this policy, as a result of complaints or findings from any independent organisations, the Director - Sanctuary Scotland and/or Legal Services will initiate an immediate review.
 - 6.2.4 Where appropriate, key stakeholders, and interested parties will be consulted as part of any review of this policy.

7. Approval

- 7.1 This policy is approved by Sanctuary Group's Executive Committee.

8. Operational arrangements

- 8.1 This policy is accompanied by the [Freedom of Information \(Scotland\) - Group Procedure](#), appendices, and supporting documentation.