October 2018

CONTRACTOR HANDBOOK

FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SOCIAL RESEARCH CONTRACTS

HANDBOOK FOR CONTRACTORS

This handbook sets out the framework for engagement between Scottish Government and contractors engaged in social research. It contains details of the tendering process for social research, guidance on writing for social research, guidance on style for written Research Reports and how to use the templates for the Research Findings and Reports, details on the payment procedures, and an outline of the publication process for research.

The Scottish Government commissions, funds, assists and conducts a range of policy relevant research and analysis. Research and analysis plays a key role in underpinning Scottish Government policies and delivery. Research supports the development, implementation and evaluation of policy and delivery. This helps to ensure that policy debate is informed by the best research evidence and thinking from across the social sciences and engineering.

Some of this work is carried out by staff within the Scottish Government whilst other research is commissioned externally. See Public Contracts Scotland for any new research opportunities. We publish our research findings in the form of research publications including research reports and research findings summary documents.

If you would like to know more about the work we do then please look at the Social Research webpages.

CONTENTS

SECTION 1: THE RESEARCH TENDERING PROCESS

Scottish Government social research contracts are put out to tender via Public Contracts Scotland (PCS). Prospective contractors should register as suppliers on PCS (using the commodity category 'consultancy – other' for research contracts) to be alerted to open opportunities to tender for projects, and be able to be selected for shortlists for 'Quickquotes' (sub £50k contracts, which are often put out to a shortlist of contractors rather than open tender).

The Procurement Journey is the basis of our research procurement process. This outlines the main approaches and main stages of procurement, and covers all forms of procurement, not just research. The tendering process varies in some respects depending on the value and complexity of the contract.

Further details on public procurement in Scotland can be found on the Scottish Government web site - http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/Procurement.

Full instructions for submitting a tender will be included in the tender documents for each individual project. General information on the tendering process for suppliers can be found at the Supplier Journey webpages.

SECTION 2: WRITING FOR SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT SOCIAL RESEARCH – CONTRACTOR INSTRUCTIONS

BACKGROUND

Social research commissioned by the Scottish Government (SG) is used to provide evidence to inform policy and delivery. Publications from these projects play an important role in ensuring that this information is used as widely as possible. For most projects we request that contractors produce a written final report and a short research summary document. The final report presents the research data collected by a project. We may also require other, shorter reports during the duration of a project. The research summary document outlines the findings of the research project and highlights the key messages. Such outputs should be written in a language and follow a style / layout which is clear, concise and jargon free, and suitable for a wide audience. Documents are then published on Scottish Government's publication pages:

The Scottish Government is keen that all research outputs are of the highest possible quality, and recognise that to achieve this every stage of the research process (including research design and analysis) must adhere to certain standards. These include following ethical and procedural principles, and also ensuring that the research project is both carried out and reported transparently and objectively. This guidance provides further information on writing and producing such documents.

KEY STAGES IN WRITING FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

The process of thinking about end of project publications should begin on the day you sign the contract letter. Outlined below are the five key stages on writing for social research:

STEP 1: STARTING-UP

The contract letter issued at the start of each project outlines what final research outputs will be required. On accepting this contract you should begin to consider how the information you collect will be reported in the outputs and discuss this in your inception meeting with the project manager. Considering the final research outputs right from the start, and how material will be organised will make the writing of the end of project documents easier.

Our intention with social research publications is that they be as widely read and accessible as possible. That means we expect they will be published as HTML pages on the website, and also in pdf and e-book formats. Given this need for accessibility and flexibility, please avoid unnecessary formatting and make use of the templates provided.

STEP 2: DOING THE RESEARCH

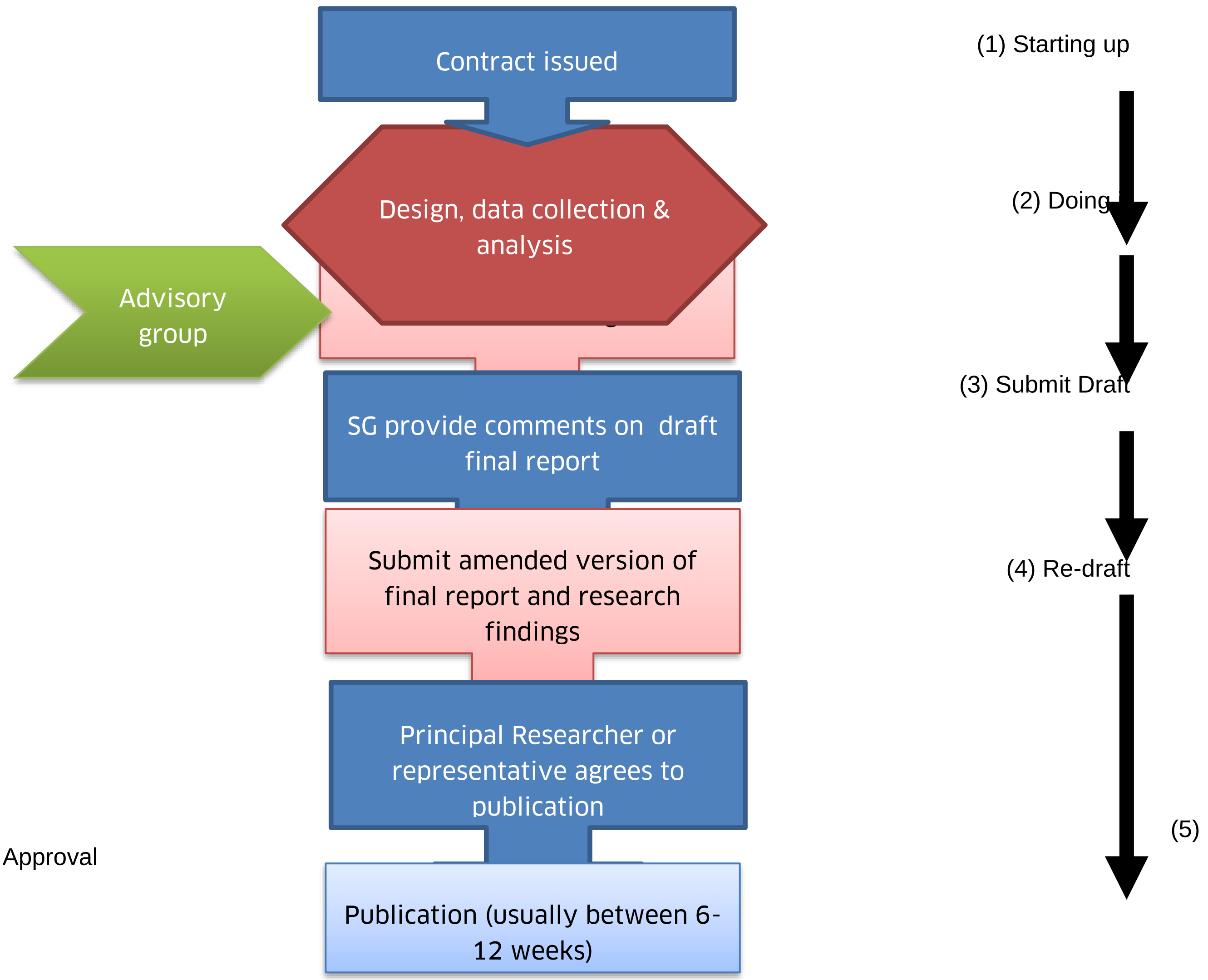
Throughout the project you should have regular discussions with the project manager on the final outputs and how they will be structured. Remember to organise the information / data as it is collected so that it can be readily reported.

It is likely that the project manager will want written updates, please keep these as concise as possible. It is also common for research, particularly where it is larger scale or higher risk to be governed by a research advisory group, who will request interim reports and may comment on updates, and interim and draft final reports.

STEP 3: SUBMITTING DRAFT REPORTS

As the project nears an end you should provide a draft copy of the final report to the research manager by the date indicated in the contract letter. This draft should be fully proof-checked, and of a publishable standard. The research manager will circulate the draft to the main clients of the work, and the Advisory Group members for comments. You should be aware that a number of drafts of final outputs may be required before approval is given for publication. Peer reviews of the outputs may also be carried out.

FIGURE 1: KEY STAGES



STEP 4: FINALISING REPORTS

The project manager will collect together comments on the first draft which they will forward to you. You will be responsible for making changes to the report in the light of these comments. Some may be technical questions or queries, others more general clarification requests, or requests for more detail. We ask that you respond to each, though it may only be to acknowledge a comment and explain why you have chosen to take a certain approach or report a certain finding in the way you have done.

It is possible that several drafts of a report will be required. It is rare that a first draft perfectly meets the requirements on it, so be prepared to allow time for revisions after the end of the project phase. Please bear in mind that any or all of these draft reports and the correspondence surrounding them are releasable under Freedom of Information legislation.

The final versions of your research outputs should be submitted fully proof checked and ready for publication. You will usually be given up to 1 month to complete these amendments.

STEP 5: APPROVING

Once the project manager is satisfied with the quality of reports they will forward these on to the Principal Researcher or their nominee, who will decide if the report(s) is of a publishable quality. The approver will assess the reports against a number of quality standards, including how well the methods are reported, the meaning of the research expressed in policy relevant terms, and the style and length. When approval is given final preparations for the publication of the reports will be made, and the final payment instalment will be made. Following approval, the documents are usually published by Scottish Government within 6 -12 weeks.

PRODUCING A RESEARCH REPORT

Research reports, particularly end of project reports are an important tool for presenting the research data collected, and also drawing out any relevant implications for policy makers. Writing a research report for a government agency is not the same as writing an article for an academic journal, or a consultancy report. It has a different objective, and it takes a different approach. Usually the early drafts of a report will be discussed by members of a research advisory group, who may be able to offer guidance on style and language, and what they find most useful.

Reports should be clear and accessible to the reader, and in general should be no longer than 50 pages (excluding annexes) when finalised in single spacing (some projects managers may request that the page limit is less – check the contract letter). The material contained in the annexes should also be formatted in the House Style. Annexes can be used to provide the results of detailed analyses, full description of research methods used (e.g. sampling strategies and response rates) and should always include the research instruments used. If your report uses technical terms then a glossary should be included at the end of the document.

To take account of the views of the project manager, policy makers and the advisory group you may be required to produce more than one draft of the final report before a final draft is signed off. All of the drafts should be of a publishable, high professional standard, and the final version should be fully proof-checked and capable of withstanding peer review.

When drafting the report you should consider the following issues (CAR):

- **C**ontext: outline the policy issue or managerial problem the research was seeking to address, as well as the aims and objectives of the project. Refer back to these throughout the report, and also highlight if these were redefined at any point. Highlight earlier research and the contribution current research may make.

- **A**pproach: Outline your methods, including the design of the study, the sources of data and details on the sample, the response rate and analysis techniques. You should outline your approach as transparently as possible so that it can be scrutinised for quality / relevance / robustness. There should be clear documentation that the methods were implemented, along with a record of any changes. Describe how you worked with policymakers / decision makers on the project.

- **R**esults: Summarise your results to show how they support the conclusions you have presented highlighting themes and messages. Conclusions should be drawn on the basis of the findings. However if they are inferred from external material / other sources then this should be made clear. Use graphs and tables if they will improve understanding.

Reports should begin with an Executive Summary, and should usually include a short research methods chapter. There should be summaries at the end of each chapters and clear signposting between and within each chapter.

PRODUCING A RESEARCH SUMMARY DOCUMENT

The *Research Summary* document (4 pages in length) provides a summary of the research project and highlights the key messages from the project. It is a stand-alone document, although it complements the project's final report. There are two key sections to the document:

Front page – Main findings

The front page comprises a short paragraph which should set the context for the research and 8-10 bullet points on the main findings of the research. Where possible these bullets should be a clear statement of the main findings expressed in a way which will be of interest to policymakers. When drafting the main findings page consider your audience – who are they and what do they most need to know about what you have learned? You should not attempt to produce definitive recommendations from research that does not offer such recommendations.

Executive Summary

The remaining part of the *Research Summary* is the Executive Summary. These are your findings condensed to serve the needs of the policymaker / decision maker, who will want to know quickly whether the main report is likely to be useful. Each section of the paper must have a short explanatory heading. Start by outlining the issues you were looking at, then (very briefly) state the aims and objectives of the research and how you carried it out. Concentrate on getting the essence of your research across and summarise your findings clearly and succinctly. Where possible the Research Summary should highlight what particular contribution / added value the research has made to evidence / practice.

OTHER RESEARCH REPORTS

Throughout the research contract you may be requested to provide other types of research documents such as inception, progress and interim reports. The contract letter will provide further information on whether and when these reports are required. The SG project manager will be able to provide further advice on the content of these reports. The most common types of additional reports are inception reports, progress or update reports and interim reports.

INCEPTION REPORTS

Inception Reports are produced shortly after the project start. They will usually follow the first meeting between the Research team and the Government Social Researchers and policy clients. They used to develop ideas and themes set out in the successful tender, and to clarify any questions that emerged in the initial meeting between the contractor and clients. They may include more detail on delivery dates, management arrangements and other related clarifications.

UPDATES OR PROGRESS REPORTS

These should be brief and contain information about the research process and describe any revisions to the project. There is not generally a need for significant time formatting or producing the report, and often they are simply emails informing on issues such as numbers of surveys delivered in a week, or progress on organising focus groups.

INTERIM REPORTS

These focus on preliminary analyses and the research findings to date. They are most common in a long multi-stage or multi-year research process. It is likely that they may be either formally published or widely circulated, so contractors should take significant care writing them and make use of the standard templates provided.

PLAIN ENGLISH

Language used in both documents must be in plain English (http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/howto.pdf) as many of the readers will not be experts in the subject area of the report, nor in the 'technical' methods used in the research. Some Plain English Essentials we expect to be addressed in these outputs are outlined below:

PLAIN ENGLISH ESSENTIALS

- *Avoid long and complex sentences and paragraphs* to keep the content of the report clear and concise.
- *Bullet Points, Footnotes, Diagrams, Tables Charts And Illustrations* can make the report clearer and emphasise main findings.
- *Avoid jargon* – force yourself to look for an everyday term (e.g. use health, rather than 'health status').

- *Tenses* should be used consistently throughout the report. Information relating to methods and research findings are best presented in the past tense, highlighting the fact that the research has been carried out and what was found.
- *Ensure the style of writing* is consistent throughout the report particularly if a number of writers have been involved with the drafting.
- *Abbreviations of terms or acronyms* (e.g. SAC for Scottish Arts Council) should be made clear to the reader at the beginning of the report, and then the abbreviation or acronym referred to in text throughout the remainder of report .

CHARTS AND TABLES

Charts and tables can improve the clarity and readability of a research report, where they are used well, and easy to understand. There are suggested table formats in the publication templates, but these are not meant to be exclusive, and contractors should feel free to experiment with tables, charts, graphs or infographics where they will improve the document as a whole.

Contractors should be aware however that there are good practice expectations on the use of charts, tables and graphs which have been produced by colleagues in the Government Statistical Service. These are not binding on social research, but there are some useful hints and tips such as the appropriate use of colour to help readers who may have colour blindness. The guidance is available here: https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Effective-graphs-and-tables-in-official-statistics-version-1.pdf.

STYLES

The Scottish Government social research templates provide a range of styles, including SG Body, SG Numbered and SG Bulleted text. The expectation is that contractors will use an appropriate style for the type of the report or research findings being used, though an SG project manager may request changes if they deem the style selected inappropriate. Accessibility to the reader is the prime concern for research reports, so for example where a report is lengthy and complex, numbered paragraphs may assist the reader. This would not be appropriate for research findings, and may not be appropriate for shorter or less structurally complex main research reports.

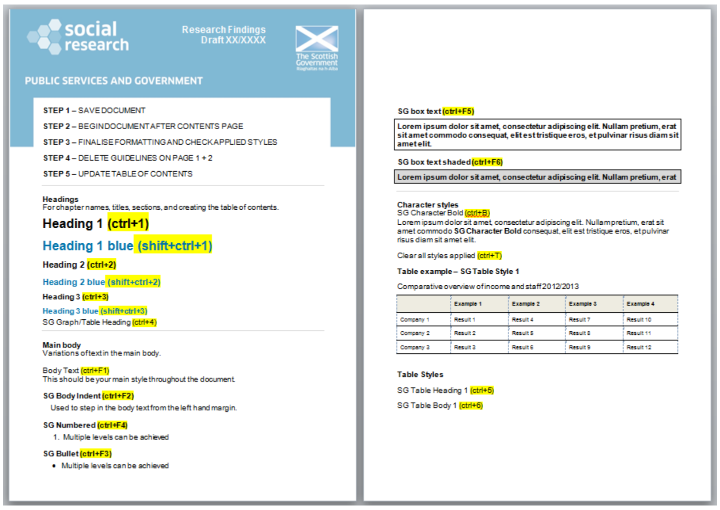
There is no expectation on a particular writing style, this should be agreed between the contractor and the SG project manager. These choices could include for example the format of references, the use of the Oxford comma, or the use of semi-colons in bulleted paragraphs.

SECTION 3: GUIDANCE ON SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION PROCESSES

Scottish Government's Social Research Publications conform to a house style. There are two separate styles, one for Research Reports and the second for Research Summaries. The templates are modified specifically for each publication using our web-based publication system myreportdoc. You should receive the up-to-date templates from the SG project manager. The template will be specific to the theme area you are writing for. It will fit with the colour scheme of that area, and the theme colours are now used for both Social research and statistical publications – though statistics publications use different formats. The themes are:

- Agriculture, Environment and Marine
- Crime and Justice
- Culture and Events
- Economy and Labour Market
- Children, Education and Skills
- Business and Energy
- Equality and Welfare
- Health and Social Care
- People, Communities and Places
- Public Services and Government
- Transport and Travel

Two examples are below – firstly a Public Services and Government branded research findings:



social research

Research Findings
Draft XX/XXXX

The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

PUBLIC SERVICES AND GOVERNMENT

STEP 1 – SAVE DOCUMENT
STEP 2 – BEGIN DOCUMENT AFTER CONTENTS PAGE
STEP 3 – FINALISE FORMATTING AND CHECK APPLIED STYLES
STEP 4 – DELETE GUIDELINES ON PAGE 1 + 2
STEP 5 – UPDATE TABLE OF CONTENTS

Headings
For chapter names, titles, sections, and creating the table of contents.

Heading 1 (ctrl+1)

Heading 1 blue (shift+ctrl+1)

Heading 2 (ctrl+2)

Heading 2 blue (shift+ctrl+2)

Heading 3 (ctrl+3)

Heading 3 blue (shift+ctrl+3)

SG Graph/Table Heading (ctrl+4)

Main body
Variations of text in the main body.

Body Text (ctrl+F1)
This should be your main style throughout the document.

SG Body Indent (ctrl+F2)
Used to step in the body text from the left hand margin.

SG Numbered (ctrl+F4)
1. Multiple levels can be achieved

SG Bullet (ctrl+F3)
- Multiple levels can be achieved

SG box text (ctrl+F5)

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nullam pretium, erat sit amet commodo consequat, elit est tristique eros, et pulvinar risus diam sit amet elit.

SG box text shaded (ctrl+F6)

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Character styles
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Clear all styles applied (ctrl+T)

Table example – SG Table Style 1

Comparative overview of income and staff 2012/2013

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4
Company 1	Result 1	Result 4	Result 7	Result 10
Company 2	Result 2	Result 5	Result 8	Result 11
Company 3	Result 3	Result 6	Result 9	Result 12

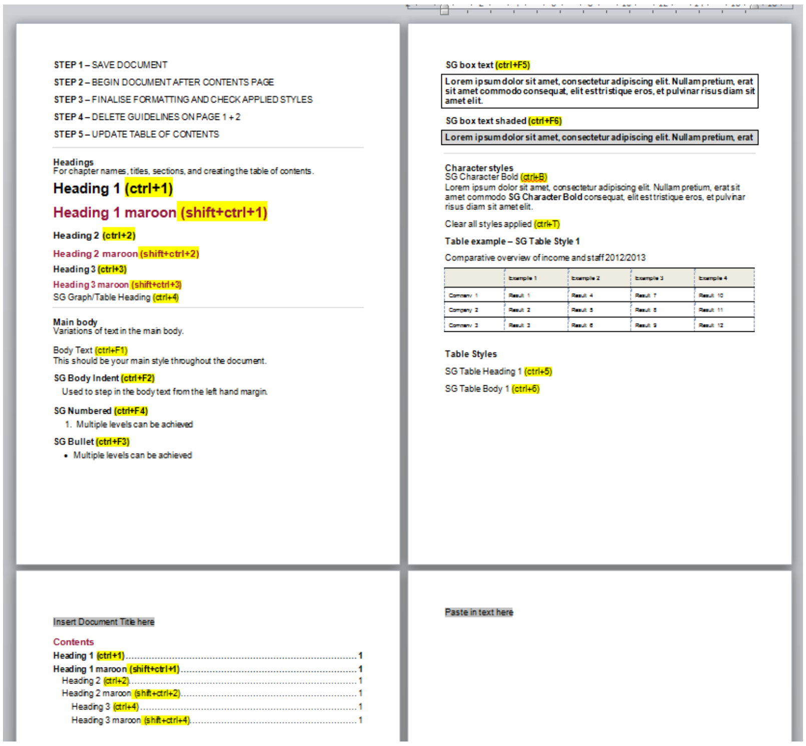
Table Styles

SG Table Heading 1 (ctrl+5)

SG Table Body 1 (ctrl+6)

Note that the theme covers not only the header, but also the formatting text in the document.

For a social research main report template the continuation of the colour scheme in the font selection continues. In the example below the template is for a social research main report for the Children, Education and Skills theme:



STEP 1 – SAVE DOCUMENT
STEP 2 – BEGIN DOCUMENT AFTER CONTENTS PAGE
STEP 3 – FINALISE FORMATTING AND CHECK APPLIED STYLES
STEP 4 – DELETE GUIDELINES ON PAGE 1 + 2
STEP 5 – UPDATE TABLE OF CONTENTS

Headings
For chapter names, titles, sections, and creating the table of contents.
Heading 1 (ctrl+1)
Heading 1 maroon (shift+ctrl+1)
Heading 2 (ctrl+2)
Heading 2 maroon (shift+ctrl+2)
Heading 3 (ctrl+3)
Heading 3 maroon (shift+ctrl+3)
SG Graph/Table Heading (ctrl+4)

Main body
Variations of text in the main body.
Body Text (ctrl+F1)
This should be your main style throughout the document.
SG Body Indent (ctrl+F2)
Used to step in the body text from the left hand margin.
SG Numbered (ctrl+F4)
1. Multiple levels can be achieved
SG Bullet (ctrl+F3)
• Multiple levels can be achieved

SG box text (ctrl+F5)
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SG box text shaded (ctrl+F6)
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Character styles
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Clear all styles applied (ctrl+T)
Table example – SG Table Style 1
Comparative overview of income and staff 2012/2013

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4
Company 1	Result 1	Result 4	Result 7	Result 10
Company 2	Result 2	Result 5	Result 8	Result 11
Company 3	Result 3	Result 6	Result 9	Result 12

Table Styles
SG Table Heading 1 (ctrl+5)
SG Table Body 1 (ctrl+6)

Insert Document Title here
Contents
Heading 1 (ctrl+1) 1
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Heading 2 (ctrl+2) 1
Heading 2 maroon (shift+ctrl+2) 1
Heading 3 (ctrl+4) 1
Heading 3 maroon (shift+ctrl+4) 1

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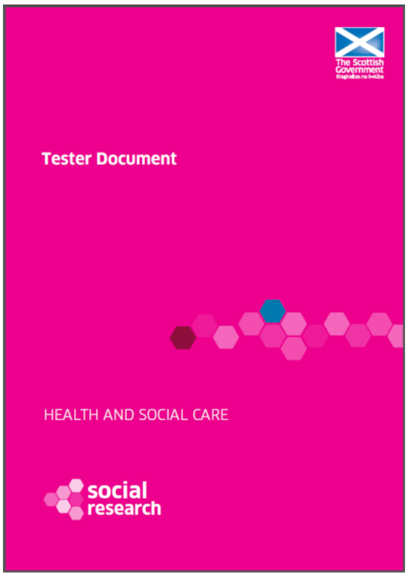
We expect that the first page of a main report will include the title of the report, the authors names and the year of publication.

Once you have submitted your document a new cover will be created by the researcher, and it will be sent to APS for publication. The covers look as in the example below, and note that the theme colour continues. In the example below the cover is for the Health and Social Care theme:



The publication process can take up to 12 weeks, though usually it is only a manner of days. All social research is expected to be of publishable quality, and the Chief Researcher is the final arbiter of publication quality, in cases of dispute. The publication process will include the appending of a rear page which includes the ISBN number, and also an indication of how a reader may request the data. **Please be aware therefore that we now expect a secure data transfer of all quantitative data generated in the course of research to the project manager responsible within the Scottish Government at the completion of the project**. The appropriate means of transmission, usually of anonymised data, should be discussed by the contractor and the SG project manager.

SECTION 4: PAYMENT PROCEDURES

EASEbuy eProcurement is our main purchasing tool in conducting business with you.

- After being awarded a contract and returning your signed contract with your BACS payment details and contact information, you will be issued with a Purchase Order. This will be emailed to you directly. Please keep this information safe as you need to quote the Purchase Order number on all invoices.
- Ensure that all invoices for the Scottish Government are sent to the invoice address on the purchase order note (this address is for a central invoice processing team established to help speed up payments). Also send a copy of the invoice to your project manager, but clearly marked 'copy'.
- When issuing your invoice to us, make sure it quotes the Purchase Order number. Without it, we cannot carry out a matching process and release your invoice for payment. As a result the invoice may have to be returned to you for re-issue quoting the Purchase Order number. This will delay payment to your business.
- Your Purchase Order number will be renewed each financial year (i.e. 1 April-31 March). You will receive this in an email at the start at the start of the new financial year. Please ensure you update your Purchase Order number and quote the correct one on your invoice.
- If by some chance a Purchase Order number is not supplied, contact the project manager who will arrange for one to be issued.

For further information contact email: Social_Research@gov.scot

SECTION 5: ETHICS, DISCLOSURE CHECKS, DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Social Researchers and their staff are expected to adhere to the highest possible ethical and legal standards throughout the course of their research. We expect contractors to consider ethical issues in planning and carrying out their research, and we have included guidance on the level of Disclosure Scotland checking that is appropriate.

ETHICS GUIDANCE

The ethics guidance we maintain aligns with the UK-wide Government Social Research (GSR) principles. These cover the main concerns for social researchers across government. In the most recent update we have adjusted the GSR guidance to take into account current practice with respect to Disclosure Scotland checks and to incorporate a Privacy Impact Assessment. Scottish Government Social Researchers are obliged to complete an ethics checklist covering each project they undertake, but contractors, their staff, and any subcontractors should also be aware that they will be expected to operate at equivalent standards, so they may wish to read or to fill out an ethics checklist for any project they undertake for us. The main Scottish Government Ethics Guidance document is here: http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Research/About/Social-Research/Guidance-for-Contractors/Ethical-Checklist

DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND CHECKS

The Scottish Government is committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Therefore we have established of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme (PVG) and the development of Basic, Standard and Enhanced checks by Disclosure Scotland.

Disclosure checks have long been an expected and often contractually enforced part of the research process. More recently however, and in line with Disclosure Scotland's own guidance we have taken a more nuanced approach, to ensure that the level of Disclosure applied for is appropriate for the risk related to it.

Researchers and research contractors should only apply for the appropriate level of disclosure/PVG checking, and not apply for a higher level or their application will be ruled ineligible. They will only be eligible for a level of clearance if the work they are undertaking or the locations they are visiting require it. The appropriate eligibility criteria for researchers are outlined below:

THE PROTECTING VULNERABLE GROUPS SCHEME:

Researchers should only apply for membership of the PVG scheme if in the course of their normal duties they will have the opportunity for unsupervised contact with either children or protected adults in a 'regulated establishment'.

For children these regulated establishments are:

- schools;
- children's detention institutions;
- children's hospitals;
- further education institutions;
- children's hostels and/or children's home.

For protected adults these regulated establishments are:

- care homes;
- residential homes secured by or provided by the council, such as sheltered accommodation or as part of care and support services for individuals with mental health issues.

This contact does not have to be daily or of any specific frequency, but there must be the possibility that it will occur as part of the researcher's normal duties. An example of this would be the reasonable possibility that an address on a face-to-face interviewers list of locations for the day was a regulated establishment such as a sheltered housing unit, at which there would be unsupervised contact with a vulnerable adult.

The PVG scheme has another route for applications where the applicant is undertaking one of a series of 'regulated activities' including education, health and care provision which require PVG certification. Routine interviewing is not on this list. As this route is not open to researchers, they should only apply for a PVG if they will be in unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults in a regulated establishment.

ENHANCED DISCLOSURE

Researchers who will have unsupervised contact with people in Prisons or Young Offenders' Institutions should apply for Enhanced Disclosure, as work taking place within the confines of a prison is eligible for Enhanced Disclosure.

BASIC DISCLOSURE

Researchers who will not be working in any of the regulated establishments or where they do not have an opportunity for unsupervised contact with children or protected adults will not be eligible for membership of the PVG scheme or for Enhanced Disclosure. However their employer can request a Basic Disclosure certificate for a project.

GENERAL ADVICE ON APPLICATIONS

Applications for PVG or Enhanced Disclosure must be relevant to the project applied for – e.g. if for working with children the application must mention unsupervised contact with children in one of the locations above; if for adults it must mention unsupervised contact with protected adults in one of the locations above.

DATA PROTECTION

1. SUMMARY

The UK's Data Protection Act 2018 and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force in May 2018. Both of these pieces of legislation apply to the processing of personal data and special category personal data (previously known as sensitive personal data). Social Research commissioned by the Scottish Government may involve the processing of personal data about individuals, so it's important for both commissioners and contractors to understand the provisions of data protection laws.

2. DATA CONTROLLER / DATA PROCESSOR

The data controller is the organisation who determines the purposes for and manner in which personal data is processed. They own the personal data and are responsible for, and must be able to demonstrate, compliance with the data protection principles.

The data processor is an organisation or person (apart from a person who is a direct employee of the organisation) who processes the personal data on behalf of the data controller.

For almost all Social Research contracts, the SG will be the data controller, and the contractor will be the data processor. ICO sets out the responsibilities of the data controller and data processor here.

For Social Research procurement, the SG's standard T&Cs along with the Data Protection schedule incorporate the responsibilities set out by ICO and, when the latter is completed with tailored information for the specific project, meet the GDPR requirement for a legally binding controller processor contract.

3. DATA PROTECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

The GDPR requires data controllers and processors to be able to demonstrate compliance with data protection principles. These principles and some of their practical implications are set out in the table overleaf:

Table 1: GDPR Principles in practice

Principle	In practice
a) Lawfulness, fairness and transparency Personal data are processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals	You must be able to meet a condition for processing, which is also known as the **legal basis**. You must inform the data subject of the processing, and their rights. This done through a privacy notice, which provides information on the purposes of the processing, the legal basis and lets them know about their rights and who to contact (see section on privacy notices below). If you are using consent as your legal basis, this must be freely given, able to be withdrawn, and explicit.
b) Purpose limitation Personal data are collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes	If you are going to use the information for a purpose that is not the one you told the individual about when collecting their data, your new purpose should be compatible with the original purpose so that you are meeting the reasonable expectations of the individual.

c) Data minimisation **Personal data processed are adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed;**	When you gather personal data, make sure that the information is relevant for your purpose and not excessive. For example, if a person's ethnicity, marital status etc is irrelevant to the topic of your survey, you probably shouldn't collect this data.
d) Accuracy **Personal data are accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date**	An individual has the right to have correct personal data held about them. Every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data that are inaccurate, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed, are erased or rectified without delay.
e) Storage limitation **Personal data are kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed**	You must not keep personal data for longer than necessary for its specified purpose. The Scottish Government's Standard T&Cs provide for personal data associated with contracts to be deleted as soon as the contract is finished, and for a certificate of destruction to be provided to the SG to confirm compliance with this provision. The SG will usually seek the transfer of an anonymised dataset at the end of a contract. In some cases it may be appropriate to agree a slightly longer retention period for personal data processed as part of a commissioned social research contract. Project managers and contractors should agree this at the outset and record the retention period in the data protection schedule of the contract.
f) Integrity and confidentiality **Personal data are processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures."**	When handling personal data, it is vital that you ensure the security of that data from loss or theft. Make sure that nobody unauthorised can gain access to the data, and that you are only disclosing personal data to the data subject (person) or their authorised representative. Lock cabinets and drawers containing personal data (and remove the key). In an electronic environment this means that files need to be password protected, and access needs to be limited to those who need it in order to do their job. At all times check and double check details before sending personal data. Encrypt electronic files containing personal data when sending. Any serious breach of security involving personal data must be reported by the Scottish Government to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) within 72 hours of us becoming aware of the breach. Tell your contract manager immediately about any incident so that it can be assessed, contained, and the ICO informed quickly if required.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

The Scottish Government is committed to Freedom of Information. It is a key tool for an informed and empowered citizenry, and in turn a more participatory society, in which everyone has the opportunity to influence their own lives and their own government. The SG receives thousands of requests for information every year, and only a very small proportion are about research. However contractors need to be aware of the regulations that govern these FoI requests and the closely related Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations (EIRs)) which both place responsibilities upon Government researchers.

STANDARD EXPECTATIONS

For Social Researchers, our standard expectations, written into our publication guidance, are that the products of Scottish Government research will be made publicly available. Under Freedom of Information legislation, we also expect that research tools, administrative information, and research data are also available for release on request.

DATA

OWNERSHIP OF RESEARCH DATA

For Scottish Government research, whether externally commissioned or carried out in-house, the Scottish Government is the data holder. This means that the Scottish Government owns the research data, analytical tools produced, and any allied reports. So, even if it is a contractor who has the information, they hold it 'on our behalf' for FOI purposes and we therefore have to obtain the information and consider it for release if the Scottish Government receives an FOI or Environmental Information Regulations request asking for it. Occasionally there are specific contractual exemptions – e.g. where someone is conducting research on our behalf on pre-existing commercial data, and none of that data enters our systems. These exemptions to SG data ownership must be specific, explicit, and must be agreed and recorded at the outset of the project. Without agreed exemptions Scottish Government will be the data owner for Freedom of Information purposes.

SECURE TRANSFER OF DATA

In order to ensure that the Scottish Government is compliant both with the terms of Freedom of Information and able to respond to any future queries, all quantitative data produced for the research should be anonymised and securely transferred to the Scottish Government on the close of the project before the final payment is made to the contractor. The Scottish Government can then decide what data should be retained and for how long. Where SG owns the data, contractors do not have the right to withhold that data from SG, including where it is the subject of a freedom of information request.

ASSURANCES OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Assurances of confidentiality are often important if we are to get research participants to volunteer their time and responses for our research. Insofar as those assurances cover personal information they are reasonable as the Scottish Government will not release personal information on private individuals via an information request (this includes any comments which could allow the person to be identified by anyone even where it doesn't directly give out their name). However non-personal information could be released, such as quotations, reporting of views or activities unless exemptions apply, as long as it is not personally identifying.

We cannot offer or guarantee confidentiality to representatives of organisations speaking or writing on behalf of their organisation, although if someone wishes to indicate that they are providing a view in confidence and don't want it included in the research report or released then that can be taken into account in considering if an exemption applies if these comments are requested via an information request.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION EXEMPTIONS

Freedom of information legislation does allow for a number of exemptions, including personal data where its release would be in breach of the Data Protection Act 1998. The main exemptions that are likely to be relevant for researchers are:

- Section 30(c) substantial prejudice the conduct of public affairs (this is where release would be likely to significantly harm our relationships with the stakeholders concerned and make them/others like them likely to be unwilling to participate in similar research interviews in future or unwilling to provide frank and honest views in future)
- Section 30(b)(ii) substantial prohibition of free and frank views (this would apply to any particularly free and frank comments where participants or others like them would be unlikely to provide similarly frank views in future if they knew their comments might be released into the public domain). Further information on Freedom of information processes are available here: http://www.gov.scot/About/Information/FOI/Training.

There are no blanket bans to the release of any type of data, process of collection or research context. Instead each case must be judged on its merits. For most data, where it can be easily anonymised and prepared for release it is unlikely that exemptions will apply. However where there is a case that there is clear evidence it would have been impossible or very difficult to carry out the research without full assurances of confidentiality, and that the research was necessary in the conduct of public affairs, it is extremely likely that data would only be released after significant redaction, removing findings and identifiable statements/transcripts. Even where this is the case it would not be expected that redaction would be blanket, but would instead cover only those aspects which are themselves sensitive, and without which it would be impossible to get useful research, and the absence of which would prejudice our ability to carry out research effectively in key government policy areas.

For example were SG to conduct research with prisoners, it could be extremely difficult to get them to consent to the research without an agreement of confidentiality. This would only apply to sensitive and/or potentially identifying statements, but not to everything they had said. So for example were they to be discussing their treatment in the prison health services, but then to make a general comment about how services should be improved, it is likely that on a line-by-line redaction that the general comment would be releasable.

It is for the Scottish Government alone to make the final determination on what to release as a part of the FoI request, though they may choose to consult with the data collector for their views. Where practical, it is also good practice to consult any third parties if you are unsure whether or not they would be happy for their comments to be released which will help you in considering whether or not information should be redacted. However, if there were large amounts of stakeholders involved this will be impractical. Where possible, it is better for researchers to ask people to indicate upfront in interviews if they make a controversial or sensitive comment whether they are content for it to be divulged (either in the research report or via a request).

WHAT DO CONTRACTORS NEED TO KNOW

Contractors need to understand that they must to be prepared to assist us in responding to requests. For contractors working at public sector institutions such as universities these requests may come directly to them or to us in Scottish Government. For those in third sector or private sector organisations who hold data for us the request will usually come to us but they will have to be involved by securely sending the data over to us as quickly as practicable. We can then make the decision over what can and should be released, and what may be redacted or withheld.

We recognise that this may be unfamiliar for some contractors, and will work with them to ensure compliance. Contractors should be aware that as the data owner and the data controller it is Scottish Government which is ultimately responsible for compliance. We are committed to high quality research, and understand the complexities of carrying out research in practise. We will work constructively to support their research including on guidance on what assurances to offer to informants (see below).

WHAT ASSURANCES CAN WE OFFER TO PARTICIPANTS?

We should always seek to reassure members of the public that we will not release their private data or personal information. However we can't offer a single form of words that would cover everyone under all circumstances. For example when speaking to a public official in their public capacity, it is likely that much of their responses would be releasable.

In any negotiation over consent to participate the researcher or research contractor should be clear that:

- We won't identify individuals or their responses in any report (particularly members of the public).
- Their responses are being collected only for research.
- That if a participant wishes for any part of their response to be non-attributable, or not included in a report, that they should let us know to assist us in complying with that wish.
- That their responses and any associated personal data will be destroyed at the close of the project.

If you have any queries about any of the above guidance, please don't hesitate to contact your contract manager or the Office of the Chief Researcher at Social_Research@gov.scot.