

Public Sector News

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Guidelines for Official Publications in Local Authorities

When you think of local authorities you may not immediately think of them as publishers. In fact, local authorities publish a vast quantity of information on a huge variety of topics. Some of the information has a short shelf-life but it is essential information for the local community. It could cover education, social care, planning, and maintenance of the highway network, road safety, community safety, waste management, recycling and much more. More substantial publications are also produced, and include the record of an authority's decision making process in the form of minutes and policy documents.

Keeping track of publications is made easier if they contain the standard information with which we are all familiar, if the requirements of legal deposit are met and certain other standards are adhered to. If they are produced electronically instead of, or as well as, in print form, there are further things to consider. Not least of these is access for those who do not use the Internet, and the future availability of material that is removed from websites without thought about the need to store material for future reference.

A new publication has been produced to give guidance on publishing to local authorities. *Guidelines for Official Publications in Local Authorities* is designed to help all those who have responsibility for writing, compiling and publishing official documents to make their publications as easy as possible for others to find, use, refer to and cite. The *Guidelines* cover the essential and additional information for inclusion in official publications, and set out basic publishing guidelines, set in the context of the various duties and responsibilities placed on local authorities by legislation and the nature of their work.

Back in 1989 a guide was produced by SCOOP, the Standing Committee on Official Publications, part of CILIP's Information Services Group. This new version has been a joint project with the bulk of the work undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research funded by Local Authority Analysis and Research, part of the Local Government Association. SCOOP and the Affiliation of Local Government Information Specialists (ALGIS) which is affiliated to the LARIA (Local Authority Research and Intelligence Association) have supported the project. The *Guidelines* are available as a PDF, as a printed document and as a Web tool. One free copy will be sent to all local authority chief executives. For further information or to access the Web tool, go to www.nfer.ac.uk/LApublishing.

Public Sector News is supplied by ALGIS (The Affiliation of Local Government Information Specialists) which represents information professionals providing information services to local authority staff and elected members. Jane Inman is currently Chair of ALGIS. ALGIS welcomes anyone with an interest in public sector information who feels they would benefit from being part of a community working in the same area. For more information go to <http://www.algis.org.uk>.