



## Business and corporate governance

### Transparency and Accountability policy

*The Transparency and Accountability policy sets out how the British Red Cross will voluntarily publish information relating to its structure and operations, in an effort to enhance transparency and to allow the opportunity for our stakeholders to evaluate the organisation's performance in delivering services to people in crisis. The policy also details how we will respond to ad hoc requests for information.*

<b>Policy owner</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Policy lead</b>	Corporate Policy Manager
<b>Audience</b>	All staff
<b>Relevant legislation and regulation</b>	<i>Data Protection Act 1998 (UK) Freedom of Information Act 2000 (UK) Companies Act 2006 (UK); and People with Significant Control Regulations 2016 (UK) Health and Social Care Act 2008, Regulations 2014 (UK) Modern Slavery Act 2015, Transparency in Supply Chains Regulations 2015 (UK)</i>
<b>Formally endorsed by</b>	Board of Trustees (through Executive Leadership Team)
<b>Endorsement date</b>	September 2016
<b>Next review</b>	September 2019

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The British Red Cross helps millions of people in the UK and around the world to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, disasters and conflicts.
- 1.2 We aim to put people in crisis at the heart of all that we do. We are accountable to all of our stakeholders: to the people who use our services, both in the UK and overseas; to the people who run those services, our valued staff and volunteers; and to the people who fund them.
- 1.3 This Transparency and Accountability policy sets out how the British Red Cross will voluntarily publish information relating to its structure and operations, in an effort to enhance transparency and to allow the opportunity for our stakeholders to evaluate the organisation's performance. The policy also details how we will respond to ad hoc information requests.

#### Definitions

- 1.4 The following definition of transparency from global governance NGO One World Trust has been used as a guide during the formulation of this policy:  
"transparency is the provision of accessible and timely information to key

stakeholders and the opening up of organisational procedures, structures and processes to their assessment”.<sup>1</sup>

## 2 **Policy statement**

### **Purpose and aims**

2.1 This policy details our undertaking to:

- > **Adopt an approach to voluntarily publish and release information in the public interest**, with the exception of sensitive information on a limited number of grounds (detailed in section 5.3.1-2).
- > **Demonstrate accountability to our stakeholders for how the organisation has used its resources** (financial and otherwise) to deliver against the objectives set out in our corporate strategy, including through our annual Trustee Report and Accounts.
- > **Meet our own internal standards** (including our values and the Behaviours Framework) to be transparent about our processes and accountable for our actions as we put people in crisis at the heart of what we do.
- > **Provide funders with relevant information to support their evaluation and reporting**. We have been and continue to publish data on all of our international grants (including from the UK’s Department of International Development) on the publicly accessible International Aid Transparency Initiative registry (<http://www.iatiregistry.org>).
- > **Respond to ad hoc requests for information**. We recognise and value the opportunity to share information about our work with people and organisations who donate to us, journalists and interested members of the public.

### **Scope**

2.2 As a charitable organisation, the British Red Cross is not generally subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 2000* (UK). However, in circumstances where the organisation is delivering services through contract and on behalf of public sector partners, we recognise that information we hold in relation to these services may be subject to freedom of information requests. Any such cases will be dealt with in line with the legislation and through public sector partners.

2.3 Please note this policy does not cover our obligations under the *Data Protection Act 1998* (UK) – please see the separate Data Protection Policy for further guidance on our approach.

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<sup>1</sup> *Pathways to Accountability: A Short Guide to the GAP Framework*, by Monica Blagescu, Lucy de Las Casas and Robert Lloyd (2005). <http://www.who.int/management/partnerships/accountability/PathwaysAccountabilityGAPFramework.pdf>

### 3 Principles guiding our approach

- 3.1 The British Red Cross recognises that we operate in an environment where there is increasing scrutiny across the breadth of our operations. This includes the way we raise, direct and use our resources as we put people in crisis at the heart of what we do; as well as when we deliver services under contract to public authorities.
- 3.2 Given the interest of stakeholders in evaluating our delivery of services to people in crisis and to promote a climate of greater transparency, we have sought to identify key documents and reports with a view to enable assessments to be made about our operations and performance. Appendix 1 sets out the documents we will publish in order to provide our stakeholders with the necessary data to evaluate our performance in delivering services to people in crisis, and in the interests of transparency.
- 3.3 As an additional measure of transparency, we have also set out in Appendix 1 the external standards and codes of conduct that we have committed to, which will be noted on our website.
- 3.4 As a general principle the British Red Cross will endeavour to release information in the interests of transparency unless there is a good reason for us not to do so. This principle also applies to ad hoc information requests.
- 3.5 The British Red Cross will, however, not release information if it will:
- > Jeopardise the safety and security of our people, those who use our services or our operations;
  - > Breach legal or confidentiality requirements; or
  - > Cause detriment to our operations on commercial sensitivity grounds.
  - > Further details on ad hoc requests for information are set out in Section 5.

### 4 Documents we will voluntarily publish

- 4.1 As part of our commitment to transparency and accountability, through this policy we commit to voluntarily publish the documents on the British Red Cross website ([www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)) listed in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 We will publish evaluation documents in accordance with our evaluation policy.

### 5 Approach to ad hoc requests

- 5.1 In addition to the information which the British Red Cross will voluntarily publish, this policy also sets out our approach to responding to ad hoc requests for information. These requests come through various channels, including our website, email and phone calls to our information lines.
- 5.2 The British Red Cross Information Classification Policy sets out the following categories of information held by the organisation, which will also apply to how we will respond to ad hoc requests for information.

- > Level 0 (public) information: will be disclosed immediately.
- > Level 1 (internal use) information: will be assessed as to whether it can be released in the interests of transparency and accountability. This may require redaction of parts of documents. Authorisation of release of Level 1 information must come from Heads of Department or Service (Level 6 staff or above), and a record of the decision must be kept centrally – please send notification to the Information Governance team: [IG@redcross.org.uk](mailto:IG@redcross.org.uk).
- > Level 2 (confidential) information: will only be disclosed if formally agreed by a member of the Executive Leadership Team or required by law<sup>2</sup>. Any personal or confidential information covered by the *Data Protection Act 1998* (UK) is considered Level 2 information. A record of the decision must be kept centrally – please send notification to the Information Governance team: [IG@redcross.org.uk](mailto:IG@redcross.org.uk).

5.3 In making a determination about whether the information is able to be released, the decision maker will use the following criteria:

- > The British Red Cross will not release information in accordance with the criteria set out in sub-section 3.5, above.
- > Consistent with transparency guidance from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, we reserve the right to limit sharing of some information in order to protect the integrity and effectiveness of internal control, administration and management processes.
- > We also reserve the right to refuse vexatious requests; those which would result in considerable cost (including staff time), and therefore divert resources away from our charitable aims; and any repeated requests.

## 6 Responsibilities

- 6.1 This policy has been approved by the **Board of Trustees**, who maintains responsibility for the organisation's overall commitment to transparency and accountability.
  - 6.2 The **Chief Executive** is the member of the Executive Leadership Team who is responsible for this policy on behalf of the Board, and will lead the organisation in a manner that encourages transparency and accountability.
  - 6.3 The **Executive Leadership Team** is responsible for championing this policy and approach to transparency and accountability within their areas of responsibility.
  - 6.4 The **Corporate Policy Manager** is the policy lead and is responsible for developing and reviewing the policy; developing an organisational communications plan for the policy; and managing queries about the policy on a day-to-day basis.
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6.5 **All staff** are expected to be familiar and comply with this policy during the course of their work.

## 7 **Laws and regulations**

7.1 Whilst the British Red Cross as a registered charity is generally not subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 2000* (UK), this policy has been developed with the principles of the *Freedom of Information Act* in mind.

7.2 We are committed to meeting our obligations under the *Data Protection Act 1998* (UK), and our internal Data Protection Policy sets out how we will abide by the principles of data protection. In summary this means:

- > We will only use personal data in ways relevant to carrying out our legitimate purposes and functions as a charitable organisation;
- > We will take due care in the collection and storage of all personal and sensitive data; and
- > We will work to ensure that our people understand their responsibilities under the legislation when processing data.

## 8 **Review and maintenance**

8.1 We commit to having an internal audit of our publishing commitments, and will keep the list of documents to be published under active review.

8.2 This policy is next due for review in September 2019.

8.3 An equality impact assessment has been completed on this policy.

## 9 **Appendices**

- > Appendix 1: list of documents we will voluntarily publish
- > Appendix 2: related documents
- > Appendix 3: document provenance

## Appendix 1: list of documents we will voluntarily publish

### *Our Movement*

- > Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;
- > International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Constitution;
- > Fundamental Principles;
- > The Seville Agreement and its Supplementary Measures;
- > Principles and Rules for Red Cross and Red Crescent Humanitarian Assistance;
- > Regulations on the use of the Emblem of the Red Cross or the Red Crescent by the National Societies.

### *Our governance*

- > British Red Cross Royal Charter, Standing Orders and Internal Regulations;
- > Paper on the British Red Cross' humanitarian auxiliary role to the British Government and armed forces;
- > List of regulators to which we report;
- > A list of our corporate policies;
- > The full policies covering the following:
  - Our complaints policy;
  - Our conflict of interests policy;
  - Our confidentiality policy;
  - Our data protection policy, as well as Subject Access Review guidelines and request form;
  - Our environment and carbon reduction policy and related guidance;
  - Our equality and diversity policy;
  - Our health and safety policy;
  - Our information governance, sharing and classification policies;
  - Our museum collections policy;
  - Our privacy policy and cookies document;
  - Our reserves policy;
  - Our safeguarding policies;
  - Our transparency and accountability policy; and
  - Our travel and expenses policy.

### *Our leadership*

- > Information on our Board of Trustees
  - Including biographical details for our Chair, Vice-Chairs and all Trustees.
  - Terms of Reference for the Board and its sub-committees; and the Board Code of Conduct.
- > Information on our Executive Leadership Team
  - Including biographical information for all positions on our Executive Leadership Team: Chief Executive; Chief Finance Officer; Executive Director (Communications and Engagement); Executive Director (Fundraising); Executive Director (International); Executive Director (People, Learning and Strategic Change); Executive Director (UK Operations); and the Chief Information Officer.
  - Salary information for the Executive Leadership Team will be presented consistent with sector best practice, known as ‘two clicks to clarity’.<sup>3</sup>
  - Terms of Reference for the Executive Leadership Team.
- > Our organisational chart, to the level of Heads of Sections.

### *Our accountability mechanisms*

- > Annual Trustee Report and Accounts
  - Consistent with the guidance provided by the Charity Commission and the Office of the Scottish Regulator, we prepare our Trustee Report and Accounts in order to “provide a fair, balanced and understandable review of the charity’s structure, legal purposes, objectives, activities, financial performance and financial position”.<sup>4</sup>
- > Annual quality account;
- > Annual infection prevention and control report;
- > Annual diversity and equality report<sup>5</sup>; and
- > Corporate strategy, Refusing to Ignore People in Crisis 2015-19.

### *Our services*

- > Information (leaflets, booklets, advice, research) on the services we deliver to people in crisis;

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<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Inquiry into Charity Senior Executive Pay and guidance for trustees on setting remuneration*, National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2014). [https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/about\\_us/our-finances-and-pay/Executive\\_Pay\\_Report.pdf](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/about_us/our-finances-and-pay/Executive_Pay_Report.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> *Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)*, Charity Commission (for England and Wales), and Office of the Scottish Regulator (2014). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charity-reporting-and-accounting-the-essentials-cc15b/charity-reporting-and-accounting-the-essentials>.

<sup>5</sup> Under development.

- > Action, research and advocacy materials on behalf of people in crisis;
- > Information (research) which contributes to the wider, external body of knowledge on supporting people in crisis; and
- > Communications materials setting out our public positions.

#### *Our external reporting commitments*

- > We publish data on all of our international grants (including from the UK's Department of International Development) on the publicly accessible International Aid Transparency Initiative registry (<http://www.iatiregistry.org>).
- > We publish a register of persons with a significant influence or control (a PSC Register) over our commercial arm, Britcross.
  - Consistent with the *Companies Act 2006* (UK) and *People with Significant Control Regulations 2016* (UK), the PSC Register for Britcross will be included in our annual Completion Statement, will be publicly accessible at Companies House, and also made available on request.
- > When the reporting requirement falls due, we will publish on our website an annual slavery and human trafficking statement.
  - Consistent with the *Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Transparency in Supply Chains) Regulations 2015* (UK) for organisations with operations in the UK, with a turnover of £36 million and above.
- > We also commit to voluntarily publish our National Health Service Information Governance Toolkit scores.

#### *Our commitment to quality standards and domestic codes of conduct*

- > Duty of Candour
  - The Care Quality Commission has a requirement under the *Health and Social Care Act 2008, Regulations 2014* (UK) that for regulated services delivered in England and Wales that we adopt a 'Duty of Candour' urging transparency and clear dialogue should a serious incident occur during the course of care or treatment. The Duty of Candour is also being introduced via legislation for regulated services in Scotland.
  - As we see this as best practice, it has been introduced as a requirement across all of UK services, and incorporated into relevant internal policies.
  - Our commitment to follow the Duty of Candour for any serious incident that occurs in any UK service sets out our pledge to:
    - Advise any service users (or their families) who have been involved in or affected by a serious incident in a timely manner that an incident has occurred; provide a truthful written account of the incident and an explanation about the investigation which will be

carried out, and offer a written apology; and offer service users appropriate support following an incident.

- > Fit and Proper Persons requirement
  - To fulfil regulatory requirements, each officer serving on our Board, Executive Leadership Team and the nominated individuals managing regulated services completes an annual declaration confirming they are 'Fit and Proper Persons' as defined by the regulators.
  - We annually confirm the leadership are fit to hold high office and to discharge their responsibilities in effectively managing our organisation. As well as meeting external regulations, this ensures our own internal standards (including as set out in our organisational policies) are met.
- > Fundraising Regulation
  - We are members of the Fundraising Regulator and follow its Code of Fundraising Practice, which ensures that organisations raising money from the public do so in an honest and proper way.
- > Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) undertaking
  - We have voluntarily signed an undertaking with the ICO affirming the organisation's commitment to best practice in our telephone fundraising.
- > Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice
  - The Code sets the benchmark for ethical standards around public interest, aiming to protect the rights of the individual and the public's right to know. It covers 16 areas, such as accuracy, privacy and the opportunity to reply.

*Our commitment to international codes of conduct*

- > Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) on Quality and Accountability
  - The CHS set out nine commitments that organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response should use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance provided.
- > European Voluntary Service Charter
  - The Charter sets out a range of principles and quality standards, including ensuring our international volunteers are involved in the full training cycle (including mid-term meetings and the final evaluation).
- > The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response
  - A voluntary code for organisations working in emergency assistance comprising ten principles, including that the humanitarian imperative comes first; and that we hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.

## Appendix 2: related documents

It is important to list any documents – other policies, procedures, guidance documents, templates, forms – which people may need to refer to or to be aware of in relation to this policy.

Document title	Relationship to this policy
Data Protection Policy	Data protection and privacy considerations are beyond the scope of this policy. Please see the separate Data Protection Policy, which sets out how the British Red Cross will meet its obligations under the <i>Data Protection Act 1998 (UK)</i> , for more information.
Information Classification Policy	The Information Classification Policy sets out three categories of information held by the organisation, and these have been used to establish the process covering how ad hoc information requests will be treated. Appendix 1 of the Information Classification Policy will be provided as additional background to this policy, to assist with making a determination about which documentation falls under a particular category.

## Appendix 3: document provenance

Date endorsed	Category	Summarise changes	Reason for changes	Consulted	Changes endorsed by
September 2016	New policy	Adoption of new policy	New policy developed by Corporate Policy Manager, and endorsed.	Communications and Engagement; Diversity; ELT; Finance; Fundraising; Governance; Information Governance; International; Legal; People, Learning & Strategic Change; Retail; Risk & Assurance; and UK Operations teams.	Board of Trustees