

UKRN joint publishing protocol

Multiple organisations publishing identical digital comms means content is duplicated, users can be confused, and content can be relegated by search engines.

This publishing protocol has been agreed between members of the UK Regulators Network (UKRN) digital comms group and aligns with the group's terms of reference commitments. The protocol applies to joint digital comms including publications.

This protocol ensures:

- a user first approach
- digital best practice
- accessibility standards
- search optimisation
- efficiencies between digital teams

To achieve this, UKRN members agree to:

- avoid duplication of published content
- challenge colleagues pushing for duplicate joint publications
- early engagement with content production in their respective organisations

This approach ensures a consistent message about joint publishing is being delivered internally within organisations.

This protocol covers when there is a 'lead' organisation on a joint piece of work, and when there are equal partners on a publication.

The lead organisation should be based on who the primary audience is for the piece of work, the type of publication being produced, or which organisation has capacity at that time to lead the publication.

When to follow the protocol

The following are cases when this protocol should be used and the best practice approach to take:

1. Joint publication between organisations

One organisation (the lead) should publish the relevant document, the other organisation(s) can then simply link to this document via a related page, eg one organisation publishes the document (ideally in HTML format but we know there are cases where an accessible PDF is required), the other produces a supporting page linking to this document. This avoids the duplication of an identical document being published on two different websites.

A further option for regulators with websites on GOV.UK is to tag a piece of content to multiple departments/organisations.

2. Joint press releases and statements

One organisation (the lead) publishes the press release or statement, the other organisation either simply links to this content from an appropriate place on its website or publishes its own shorter version. It can then support via its social media and through other channels, eg speeches, blogs and articles.

3. Joint working group publishing

For minutes or updates produced following a joint working group or forum there are the following best practice recommendations:

- Content is published on just one organisation's website. The other organisations can then simply link to it.
- Alternate publishing between the organisations. Organisations take it in turns to publish periodical updates.

A last resort should be the creation of a bespoke site as the central location for joint working group content. Organisations then link to this site.

When this protocol doesn't need to be followed

- For urgent or out of normal business hours publishing tasks where the priority is often on promptness of publishing and the approach has been agreed in advance.

UKRN digital comms group attendees:

- Bank of England
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Competition and Markets Authority
- Electoral Commission
- Financial Conduct Authority
- Information Commissioner's Office
- Ofcom
- Office of Rail and Road
- Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner
- Ofsted
- Ofwat
- Payment Systems Regulator
- Regulation of Social Housing
- The Pensions Regulator
- Single Source Regulations Office
- Utility Regulator