

Scottish Natural Heritage
Rangers in Scotland





Foreword

Ranger Services in Scotland are provided by a diverse range of local and national organisations – from national agencies and local authorities through to NGOs, private land owners and local communities. Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has traditionally provided financial support for many of these services, though from April 2009 its funding will only be available to the community, voluntary and the private sector. This is one of a number of important recent changes in the legislative, policy and administrative context that Scotland's Ranger Services operate within.

Against this background, this statement seeks to provide a clear national perspective for Rangering in Scotland over the next 10 years. Building on SNH's 1997 Ranger policy, it sets out a specific and key role for Rangers in the delivery of a wide range of benefits and provides the strategic context and direction within which Ranger Services can be developed and managed effectively to meet local needs within the framework of national priorities established by the Scottish Government.

This statement has been prepared by SNH with close involvement from a number of key stakeholders involved in funding, delivering or supporting Ranger Services in Scotland. It has been subject to public consultation, and the statutory processes of Strategic Environmental Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment. The statement is endorsed by COSLA, Forestry Commission Scotland, Historic Scotland, the Cairngorms and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authorities and the Scottish Countryside Rangers' Association.

Introduction

Ranger Services provide the welcome, guidance and local knowledge which can help and encourage the public to enjoy the outdoors and understand more about their environment. Ranger Services also play an important role in caring for the places people come to enjoy and help resolve the difficulties that can sometimes arise from enjoying the outdoors. Through this work, Rangering contributes to each of the Government's strategic objectives for a wealthier and fairer, stronger and safer, healthier, smarter and greener Scotland.

Rangers today

Background

Ranger Services are a well-established and important part of Scotland's outdoor access, countryside and heritage infrastructure. Some services also operate within urban areas, focusing on parks, green belts and other types of greenspace. There are around 60 local authority, community, voluntary and private sector Ranger Services employing over 300 full-time equivalent posts (FTEs) in total. Other Ranger Services are provided directly by public bodies such as Forestry Commission Scotland, Historic Scotland and the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. All are linked by a common profession, represented nationally through the Scottish Countryside Rangers' Association (SCRA) and globally through the International Ranger Federation (IRF).

The statutory basis in the public sector for employing Rangers in Scotland is three-fold. The Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, as amended by the 1981 Act of the same name, provides powers for local authorities and other public bodies to employ Rangers for the following purposes: to provide assistance and advice; to secure compliance with byelaws and to perform other related duties. More recently, Section 24 of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 provides powers for local authorities to employ Rangers with the purpose of providing advice, assistance and related functions in respect to outdoor access rights. These Rangers can operate on any land where byelaws are in place or access rights apply. Finally, other public bodies such as the National Park Authorities or Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) can also employ or grant aid Rangers under their founding legislation and these Rangers support the delivery of the specific aims of these bodies.

Irrespective of their specific role or responsibilities, experience suggests that the most successful Ranger Services result where there is:

- a clearly defined and well understood role for Rangers within the employing organisation's overall strategy/service delivery plan;
- good leadership of the service and continuity in staffing;
- effective work planning and management systems in place;
- adequate budget support for revenue and capital costs;
- support for continuing professional development of staff including appropriate training;
- access to relevant support either within the wider employer's organisation or contracted in; and
- contact and close working with other Ranger Services and relevant organisations within or close to the area.

Essential for all these factors is an employer fully committed to the aims, purpose and effective planning of its Ranger Service.

Key Benefits

Ranger Services have an established track record in delivering a range of benefits for the public, the natural and cultural heritage, the employer and for land managers. These benefits mean that Ranger Services make an important contribution to a number of key Government policies, most notably:

- increasing **health and well-being** through facilitating access to and promoting enjoyment and understanding of the outdoors;
- encouraging people to be **active citizens** by helping to build stronger and safer communities and providing opportunities for volunteering, locally or further afield;
- tackling **social inclusion** by working with less advantaged groups and communities;
- supporting sustainable **economic development** by maintaining, managing and promoting infrastructure for tourism; and
- enhancing the **natural and historic environment** for future generations, including designated sites and greenspace close to where people live.

Not all Ranger Services deliver all these benefits, but collectively the achievements result in significant positive impacts on the environment and on human health and well-being. Within the national performance framework established by the Scottish Government, Ranger Services can also play a direct role in delivering the key performance indicator of increasing 'the proportion of adults making one or more visits to the outdoors each week'.



The benefits delivered by Ranger Services

For the public	For the natural and cultural heritage	For the employer	For the land manager
Opportunities for physical activity in the outdoors leading to better health and well-being	Greater understanding and appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage by the public and Ranger Service employers	More effective use of facilities and services provided	Greater awareness and understanding of land management requirements by visitors
Better quality management of sites and facilities enjoyed by visitors	Protection and enhancement of species, habitats, landscapes, geodiversity and the historic environment	Local contact with residents and land managers and a means to hear views and identify issues	Mediation on land management problems arising from public use
Information about where to go and what to do	More sensitive use by an informed public – including issues such as responsible access, recycling, sustainable travel	Taking forward specific action to address the Government's key performance indicator of increasing 'the proportion of adults making one or more visits to the outdoors each week'	Greater awareness and understanding of the needs of visitors by land managers and their staff
A welcoming, reassuring and visible presence for people with concerns for safety and security	Management of specific areas of natural and cultural heritage value	Monitoring, planning and management	Income from some revenue generating aspects, plus local economic benefits from people visiting areas managed by Rangers
Provision for people with special needs	Monitoring, planning and management	Community-based Ranger Services are a key driver for the sustainable development of their communities	First hand provision of advice and information on Government policies
A better quality environment resulting from action for the natural and cultural heritage			
Increased enjoyment, awareness and understanding of the natural and cultural heritage			
Opportunities for communities to engage in caring for the natural heritage			
Formal and informal environmental education and the opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge			
Increased confidence in using the countryside			

The changing context

A growing number of legislative, policy and administrative developments are changing the context within which Ranger Services operate, including:

- new legislation and policy on outdoor access, biodiversity, National Scenic Areas, and community planning, equality, disability and diversity, and the establishment of National Parks;
- the development of the Government's five strategic objectives, together with increased emphasis on sustainable economic growth, health inequalities and community development; and
- public sector reform, leading to close working between different parts of Government, changes to local authority service provision arising from single status, best value and the development of countryside trusts, and an increased emphasis on efficiency and outcomes.

Scottish Ministers have also decided to change funding arrangements for Ranger Services provided by local authorities. From April 2009, all funding for these services and other natural heritage activity will be channelled directly through Single Outcome Agreements between the Scottish Government and local authorities. New arrangements will also apply in the Cairngorms National Park, where from April 2009 the Cairngorms National Park Authority will take over responsibility from SNH for grant-aid of Ranger Services operating within the Park. Looking further ahead, changes to the funding of other Ranger Services may result from the future development of the Scottish Rural Development Plan.



Refreshing Scotland's approach to Rangers

Within this changing context, there is a need to define the role of Rangers more clearly, to revisit the essential aims introduced by SNH in its 1997 policy statement and to develop a clearer national vision for all of Scotland's Ranger Services. Refreshing the approach to Rangers in Scotland is not for SNH alone, but is a task that needs to be shared with SCRA, COSLA, Ranger Service employers and other key stakeholders.

Defining the role of Rangers

The overall purpose of Rangers is to connect people with places. Rangers should have strong people-skills, be knowledgeable about the natural and cultural heritage and be committed to increasing enjoyment, understanding and care of these resources by and for the public.

Rangers promote the enjoyment, understanding and care of Scotland's outdoors through: the first-hand provision of information, advice and activities; interpretation; the management of sites and facilities; and seeking to secure responsible behaviour.

Refreshed aims of Rangers

To deliver this role effectively, Rangers should have the following aims:

To ensure a warm welcome and provide support to help people enjoy the outdoors;

To increase awareness, understanding, care and responsible use of the natural and cultural heritage; and

To support the sustainable management and use of the outdoors to meet a range of social, economic and environmental objectives.

All Ranger Services in Scotland should work to achieve each of these aims, though the balance between them may vary from service to service. In larger organisations, other staff may lead on or contribute towards one or more of them. But it is the Ranger Service which has the lead role in delivering these aims collectively through first-hand provision for the public in the outdoors. On-going provision and development of this service is essential if this agenda is to be tackled effectively.

Increasing public enjoyment of, and engagement with, the natural world to improve health and well-being and reduce inequalities is a key objective for the Scottish Government. Ranger Services can help more people enjoy the outdoors through outdoor recreation, volunteering and education. In helping to deliver this approach, SNH and others will look to specifically champion this aspect of Ranging further, focusing particularly on the young, people with health problems, ethnic minorities and less advantaged communities.

A new vision for Scotland's Ranger Services

Scotland's Rangers connect people with places. They provide an innovative, inspirational and professional service, committed to enhancing public enjoyment, understanding and care of the outdoors, focused on maintaining the quality and relevance of their work and recognised, valued and supported by their employers, other related professions and the public.

Scotland's Rangers provide an established and mature service with much to offer the public and the places they enjoy. For local authorities in particular, they can provide an important tool for delivering many of the objectives which may be identified in their Single Outcome Agreements with the Scottish Government.

To ensure greater public recognition of Rangers and use of the services they provide, employers should seek to be more consistent in the use of the 'Ranger' job title. Increased use – alongside other corporate branding – of the national 'Ranger' logo is also essential.

Since the first services commenced in the early 1970s, Rangering in Scotland has become an established profession, which continues to develop. Alongside appropriate pay and conditions, the up-skilling of staff is an essential ingredient of a healthy Ranger profession. Renewed effort in this area is needed by all to safeguard the long-term investment in Ranger Services. As a first step in this process, SCRA is working with SNH, COSLA and other key partners to develop a national training and development plan to achieve the cost effective delivery of agreed skills and competencies for Rangers. A range of material providing information for the public on the work of Ranger Services and to promote good practice is also planned.





Delivering the approach in practice

Refreshing the role, aims and vision for Scotland's Ranger Services requires collective action from a range of partners to deliver:

- better local and national reporting and promotion of the benefits provided by Ranger Services and the contribution these make to Government policies;
- greater recognition of the value and important contribution of Ranger Services by employers, key partner organisations and the public;
- longer-term planning, management and funding for Ranger Services by employers;
- support for the specific activities, projects and initiatives of Ranger Services from a range of funding partners; and
- the continued development of a committed, competent and skilled Ranger workforce.

While our role is changing, SNH has a continuing contribution to make to each of these actions. As the lead national body for Ranging in Scotland, we will also assess and report on progress more generally as shown in the table overleaf.

Delivering the new approach

<p>Action required</p>	<p>Better local and national reporting and promotion of the benefits from Ranger Services</p>	<p>Greater recognition of the value and important contribution of Ranger Services by employers, key partners organisations and the public</p>	<p>Longer-term planning, management and funding for Ranger Services by employers</p>	<p>Support for the specific activities, projects and initiatives of Ranger Services from a range of funding partners</p>	<p>Continued development of a committed, competent and skilled Ranger workforce</p>
<p>Specific SNH contribution</p>	<p>National oversight and reporting, with the input of Ranger Service employers, on key achievements</p> <p>Support and input to the development of promotional material and good practice</p>	<p>Delivery of advocacy and promotion at national and local level</p> <p>Advocacy for the use of the national Ranger logo by all Ranger Services across Scotland, confirmed in grant conditions for supported services</p>	<p>Liaison with Ranger Services' employers, nationally and locally</p> <p>Implementation of simplified grant and reporting arrangements for community, voluntary and private sector Ranger Services</p>	<p>Enhanced rates of start-up support for new Ranger Services eligible for SNH funding</p> <p>Involvement in projects and initiatives involving Rangers that support closer public engagement with the natural world</p>	<p>Support and input to the development of a training and development plan for Rangers</p> <p>Support and input to the continued development and activities of SCRA.</p>
<p>Proposed outcome</p>	<p>Better understanding of the role, function and outputs of Ranger Services and their contribution to Government policies achieved</p>	<p>Rangers seen as providing a core service by employers/ dependence on SNH funding decreased</p> <p>Increased consistency in the use of the 'Ranger' job title and national Ranger logo</p>	<p>Effective planning and management arrangements in place</p>	<p>Overall number and distribution of Ranger Services maintained and enhanced from present levels</p> <p>Ranger Service projects and initiatives successfully delivered</p>	<p>Increase in number of Ranger training days</p> <p>Enhanced career development for Rangers</p>

This Statement has been endorsed by



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Loch Lomond
& The Trossachs
National Park

Pàirc Nàiseanta Loch Laomainn
is nan Trosaisichan

