

FOI/18/01408 Response

Document 1 – Email chain

From: [redacted – exemption applies]

Sent: 09 August 2017 15:15

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Cc: First Minister; Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport; Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work; Minister for Childcare and Early Years; DG Education, Communities & Justice; Robertson FMG (Fiona); Logan G (Graeme); Reid K (Karen) (EdS); Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland); [redacted – exemption applies]; Bell D (Donna); [redacted – exemption applies] Bruce A (Andrew); Hicks C (Clare); [redacted – exemption applies]

Subject: Official Sensitive - SG access to SNSA data

Please find attached a note for DFM setting out the options for SG accessing data/results from the forthcoming National Standardised Assessments.

A steer in advance of the assessments going live would be helpful to allow clear comms lines to be in place.

<< File: NIF - SNSA data access submission - August 2017.doc >> RELEASED UNDER FOI REVIEW 17/02015

[redacted – exemption applies]

From: [redacted – exemption applies] **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 23 August 2017 12:27

To: [redacted – exemption applies]; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Cc: First Minister; Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport; Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work; Minister for Childcare and Early Years; DG Education, Communities & Justice; Robertson FMG (Fiona); Logan G (Graeme); Reid K (Karen) (EdS); Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland); [redacted – exemption applies]; Bell D (Donna); [redacted – exemption applies]; Bruce A (Andrew); Hicks C (Clare); [redacted – exemption applies]

Subject: RE: Official Sensitive - SG access to SNSA data

[redacted – exemption applies]

DFM has noted your submission, he has commented that he thinks that the SG should access National level data and is content to agree with the recommendation reporting to LA's should not provide an overt platform for producing comparative, school-level analysis.

[redacted – one sentence - exemption applies] These arrangements properly put the focus on improvement at school and local level.

[redacted – exemption applies]

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From: [redacted – exemption applies]

Sent: Tuesday, 12 September 2017 08:32

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills; Wilson M (Mick)

Cc: First Minister; Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport; Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work; Minister for Childcare and Early Years; DG Education, Communities & Justice; Robertson FMG (Fiona); Logan G (Graeme); Reid K (Karen) (EdS); Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland); [redacted – exemption applies]; Bell D (Donna); Bruce A (Andrew); Hicks C (Clare); [redacted – exemption applies]; MacDougall A (Audrey); [redacted – exemption applies]

Subject: RE: Official Sensitive - SG access to SNSA data

[redacted – exemption applies]

Following DFM's response below on SG access to SNSA data we have been giving further thought to how to announce that position. As previously indicated, it is likely that the decision to access only national level data will be very well received by stakeholders when it is made public.

Our proposal is that DFM make the announcement as part of his keynote speech at the International Improvement Conference in Glasgow on 22 September. The focus of the Conference is on the use of data for improvement purposes and we propose that DFM's speech concentrates on the variety of data we now have for improvement purposes and the role of the new SNSA data as part of that – the speech would also provide the opportunity to formally announce the availability of the SNSA to schools since 24 August. Setting out how we will use the SNSA data to identify national trends, areas of concern, good practice etc and how we will use it to help target improvement priorities and activities will therefore be a good fit for this speech [redacted 2 sentences – exemption applies]

[redacted 2 sentences – exemption applies]

We have discussed and agreed this approach with Comms as part of the wider comms planning they are doing for week beginning 18 September, in particular around SLF and the ICEA meeting.

[redacted – exemption applies]

From: [redacted – exemption applies]

Sent: 12 September 2017 08:41

To: [redacted – exemption applies] ; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and

Skills; Wilson M (Mick)

Cc: First Minister; Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport; Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work; Minister for Childcare and Early Years; DG Education, Communities & Justice; Robertson FMG (Fiona) (Director of Learning); Logan G (Graeme); Reid K (Karen) (EdS); Morrison E (Elizabeth) (Education Scotland); [redacted – exemption applies] ; Bell D (Donna); Bruce A (Andrew); Hicks C (Clare); [redacted – exemption applies] MacDougall A (Audrey); [redacted – exemption applies]

Subject: Re: Official Sensitive - SG access to SNSA data

[redacted – exemption applies]

To note that comms planning for next week is still being bottomed out - Comms and Spads are considering this proposed announcement and will provide fuller media handling advice to DFM in due course.

[redacted – exemption applies]

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

Document 2 – Email chain

From: [redacted – exemption applies]
Sent: 01 February 2018 09:30
To: [redacted – exemption applies]
Cc: [redacted – exemption applies]
Subject: SSLN organisers

Hi [redacted – exemption applies]

For information mostly, so you know what Graeme Logan is referring to, when he was talking about SSLN organisers.

The organisers for numeracy from SSLN were easy to pick up they were:

- data and analysis
- estimation and rounding
- fractions decimal fractions and percentages
- ideas of chance and uncertainty
- measure
- money
- number and number processes
- time

From SSLN literacy this is not so easy.

The main organisers were

- Reading
- Writing
- Listening

Then they were split in to E&Os (experience and outcomes)

- Reading - Enjoyment and choice
- Reading - Tools for reading
- Reading - Finding and using information
- Reading - Understanding, analysing and evaluating

- Writing - Enjoyment and choice
- Writing - Tools for writing
- Writing - Organising and using information
- Writing - Creating texts

- Listening and talking - Enjoyment and choice
- Listening and talking - Tools for listening and talking

- Listening and talking - Finding and using information
- Listening and talking - Understanding, analysing and evaluating
- Listening and talking - Creating texts

[redacted – exemption applies]

From: [redacted – exemption applies]
Sent: 01 February 2018 13:44
To: [redacted – exemption applies]
 Logan G (Graeme)
Cc: [redacted – exemption applies] ; Wilson M (Mick)
Subject: SNSA National Report 2017/18

Hi [redacted – exemption applies]

Further to our discussion yesterday, I agreed to provide you with a draft outline/summary of what we would like ACER to produce for a National report.

This report should contain qualitative analysis that shows which ‘organisers’ (not sure what these actually are within the SNSA, but [redacted – exemption applies] has kindly provided the ones provided obtainable from the SSLN) children across Scotland are doing particularly well in, and which ‘organisers’ children appear to find challenging.

Such qualitative analysis should be broken down:

- Children who undertook the SNSA from the start of the 2017/18 school year - 31 December 2017; and from 1 January 2018 - end of 2017/18 school year
- Student Stage
- Gender
- Assessment Type / Organiser
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) Quintiles
- Additional Support Needs
- Looked After Children (LAC)
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Ethnic Background

Depending on the available number of children, some of the above could be broken down further, for example:

- Student Stage by Gender (e.g. what are the areas of strengths/weakness for P1 boys?)
- SIMD Quintile 1 by Student Stage by Gender (e.g. what are the areas of strengths/weaknesses for P1 boys who live in the most deprived SIMD quintile (i.e. children who live in the bottom 20% SIMD ranks)

Some breakdowns will likely not be possible (due to small numbers), for example

- By LAC may be possible
- Student Stage by LAC may be still possible
- Student Stage by LAC and gender may still be possible
- Student Stage by LAC, gender and SIMD 1 may not be possible

[redacted – 3 paragraphs – exemption applies]

[redacted – exemption applies]

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Document 3 – Email chain
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From: [redacted – exemption applies]
Sent: 03 November 2017
To: [redacted – exemption applies]
Subject: FoI on standardised national testing

Hi [redacted – exemption applies]

This FoI response has been passed to the Herald by [redacted – exemption applies]

There is an email from Audrey MacDougall dated May this year which says the only way national trend data could be extrapolated from the standardised national assessments is if half the pupil cohort sits them at the same time.

The Scottish Government has already said it is up to teachers when these tests will be taken and the EIS said it would boycott the tests if councils imposed any blanket sitting arrangements.

Is it the case then that these tests will not be able to provide statistically robust year on year comparisons on national trends for literacy and numeracy as was originally envisaged?

If not then does that mean we no longer have any reliable measure of literacy and numeracy at all given the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy has been scrapped?

Happy to chat this through,

Thanks,

[redacted – exemption applies]

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PO DFM,

Cc: as above

We have received the below query from [redacted – exemption applies] at the Herald, about the veracity of standardised assessment national data.

The query has been prompted by material released to [redacted – exemption applies] by policy colleagues this week following an FoI review (attached) and the story is likely to feature prominently in tomorrow’s Herald – potentially the front page splash.

I have verbally briefed [redacted – exemption applies] that our focus is on CfE levels, however he has asked:

- SG has already committed to accessing national trend data (which we are obliged to publish under FoI). Have we come up with a ‘brilliant idea’ to ensure its statistical robustness? If so, what is it?
- If it involves cohorts of students sitting assessments at the same time, are we concerned it will be boycotted by the EIS?

[redacted – 2 sentences – exemption applies]

Thanks,

[redacted – exemption applies]

A SG spokeswoman said:

“We have been clear that the most complete way of measuring children’s progress is achievement against the relevant Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level for their stage, based on the professional judgement of their teachers.

“Standardised assessments are only one source of information teachers have available to inform their professional judgement, alongside classwork, observation and other assessment options. As we have previously stated, standardised assessment results in isolation will only give a snapshot of how a child is doing – which is why we are focusing on CfE level data which will provide a much fuller and more meaningful picture of how Scotland’s education system is performing and where improvements are required.”

[redacted – exemption applies] | [redacted] | Scottish Government | T: (+44) [redacted] | M: (+44) [redacted]
[redacted – exemption applies]

From: [redacted – exemption applies] **On Behalf Of** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Sent: 03 November 2017 16:26

To: [redacted – exemption applies] ; Bell D (Donna)

Cc: First Minister; Communications DFM & Education; News Desk; [redacted – exemption applies] ; Bell D (Donna); Robertson FMG (Fiona); [redacted – exemption applies] Wilson M (Mick); [redacted – exemption applies] ; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Subject: RE: Line to clear - standardised assessment data

Importance: High

[redacted – exemption applies] /Donna

[redacted 2 sentences]

[redacted – exemption applies]

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From: [redacted – exemption applies] >

Date: Friday, 03 Nov 2017, 4:47 pm

To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills [redacted]

Bell D (Donna) [redacted]

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: RE: Line to clear - standardised assessment data

[redacted – exemption applies]

[redacted – 2 sentences – exemption applies]

[redacted – exemption applies]

From: Bell D (Donna)

Sent: 03 November 2017 17:01

To: [redacted – exemption applies] ; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills

Cc: First Minister; Communications DFM & Education; News Desk; [redacted – exemption]

applies] Robertson FMG (Fiona); [redacted – exemption applies] Wilson M (Mick); [redacted – exemption applies]

Subject: RE: Line to clear - standardised assessment data

[redacted – exemption applies] just for background, the issues that Audrey raised in her note have since been addressed by the norming work that we are doing for standardisation. We are doing 2 exercises - one in November and one in the spring which give 2 points of reference, negating the need for a single assessment window to make the data comparable and valid. [redacted – one sentence – exemption applies] I just want to make sure DFM knows that the issue has been addressed and the data will be valid.

Thanks
Donna

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

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Document 4 – Email chain
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From: [redacted]
Sent: 03 November 2017 11:03
To: [redacted – exemption applies]
Subject: FoI on standardised national testing

Hi [redacted – exemption applies] ,

This FoI response has been passed to the Herald by [redacted – exemption applies].

There is an email from Audrey MacDougall dated May this year which says the only way national trend data could be extrapolated from the standardised national assessments is if half the pupil cohort sits them at the same time.

The Scottish Government has already said it is up to teachers when these tests will be taken and the EIS said it would boycott the tests if councils imposed any blanket sitting arrangements.

Is it the case then that these tests will not be able to provide statistically robust year on year comparisons on national trends for literacy and numeracy as was originally envisaged?

If not then does that mean we no longer have any reliable measure of literacy and numeracy at all given the Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy has been scrapped?

Happy to chat this through,

Thanks,

[redacted – exemption applies]

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From: [redacted – exemption applies]

Sent: 03 November 2017 11:07

To: Wilson M (Mick); [redacted – exemption applies]

Cc: Communications DFM & Education; News Desk; [redacted – exemption applies]); Bell D (Donna); Robertson FMG (Fiona); [redacted – exemption applies]

Subject: FW: FoI on standardised national testing

Importance: High

Mick, policy colleagues,

To see the follow-up query we have received to the attached FoI response issued to [redacted – exemption applies]

Can you please advise?

Thanks,

[redacted – exemption applies]

From: Wilson M (Mick)

Sent: 03 November 2017 11:51

To: [redacted – exemption applies]

Cc: Communications DFM & Education; News Desk; [redacted – exemption applies]); Bell D (Donna); Robertson FMG (Fiona); [redacted – exemption applies]

Subject: RE: FoI on standardised national testing

[redacted – exemption applies]

[redacted – one sentence – exemption applies] You could simply point out that we have repeatedly made clear that the national measure of performance in literacy and numeracy for the BGE will be the annual collection of the Achievement of CfE Levels data.

[redacted – one sentence – exemption applies]

Cheers,

Mick Wilson
Deputy Director, Education Analysis
Tel: [redacted]

From: [redacted – exemption applies]

Sent: 03 November 2017 12:34

To: Wilson M (Mick); [redacted – exemption applies]

Cc: Communications DFM & Education; News Desk; [redacted – exemption applies] ; Bell D (Donna); Robertson FMG (Fiona); [redacted – exemption applies]

Subject: RE: FoI on standardised national testing

Importance: High

Thanks Mick (and [redacted – exemption applies]),

I have spoken to [redacted – exemption applies] to brief strongly that CfE level data is the replacement for SSLN, which we have always been clear about.

However, he has now asked a number of very insightful follow-up questions:

- SG has already committed to publishing national trend data. Have we come up with a 'brilliant idea' to ensure its statistical robustness? If so, what is it?
- If it involves cohorts of students sitting assessments at the same time, are we concerned it will be boycotted by the EIS?

I understand the Herald news desk has already allocated prominent page space for this story tomorrow so we will need to provide a swift and robust response.

How does this work?

A SG spokeswoman said:

“

[redacted – 2 paragraphs – exemption applies]

Background:

The Scottish Government will have access to national level data only, to help us identify trends, including strengths and weaknesses in particular aspects of literacy and numeracy. This will, in turn, inform national policy, and drive support and improvement priorities to enhance the education and life chances of our young people.

[redacted – exemption applies]

From: Wilson M (Mick)

Sent: 03 November 2017 13:23

To: [redacted – exemption applies]

Cc: Communications DFM & Education; News Desk; [redacted – exemption applies] Bell D (Donna); Robertson FMG (Fiona); [redacted – exemption applies]

Subject: RE: FoI on standardised national testing

[redacted – 2 sentences – exemption applied]

The sampling issue is not about nationally representative data it's about contractors being able to derive a "standard" against which pupils sitting the test can be compared. I do not think that is relevant here.

M

Mick Wilson
Deputy Director, Education Analysis
Tel [REDACTED]

From: [redacted – exemption applies]
Sent: 03 November 2017 14:20
To: Wilson M (Mick); [redacted – exemption applies]
Cc: Communications DFM & Education; News Desk; [redacted – exemption applies]; Bell D (Donna); Robertson FMG (Fiona); [redacted – exemption applies]
Subject: Media query - line for feedback - standardised assessment data - due 3.15pm

Thanks, Mick.

[redacted – one sentence – exemption applies]

A SG spokeswoman said:

“We have been clear that **the most complete way** of measuring children’s progress is achievement against the relevant Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level for their stage, based on the professional judgement of their teachers.

“Standardised assessments are only one source of information teachers have available to inform their professional judgement, alongside classwork, observation and other assessment options. As we have previously stated, standardised assessment results in isolation will only give a snapshot of how a child is doing – which is why we are focusing on CfE level data which will provide a much fuller and more meaningful picture of how Scotland’s education system is performing and where improvements are required.”

[redacted – exemption applies]

From: Wilson M (Mick)
Sent: 03 November 2017 14:26
To: [redacted – exemption applies]
Cc: Communications DFM & Education; News Desk; [redacted – exemption applies]; Bell D (Donna); Robertson FMG (Fiona); [redacted – exemption applies]
Subject: RE: Media query - line for feedback - standardised assessment data - due 3.15pm

[redacted – exemption applies]

[redacted 2 sentences – exemption applies]

M

Mick Wilson
Deputy Director, Education Analysis
Tel: [redacted]

From: [redacted – exemption applies]

Sent: 03 November 2017 14:36

To: Wilson M (Mick); [redacted – exemption applies]

Cc: Communications DFM & Education; News Desk; [redacted – exemption applies] ; Bell D (Donna); Robertson FMG (Fiona); [redacted – exemption applies]

Subject: RE: Media query - line for feedback - standardised assessment data - due 3.15pm

[redacted – two sentences – exemption applies]

[redacted – exemption applies]

From: [redacted – exemption applies]

Sent: 03 November 2017 15:07

To: [redacted – exemption applies] ; Wilson M (Mick); [redacted – exemption applies]

Cc: Communications DFM & Education; News Desk; [redacted – exemption applies] ; Bell D (Donna); Robertson FMG (Fiona); [redacted – exemption applies]

Subject: RE: Media query - line for feedback - standardised assessment data - due 3.15pm

Happy

Regards

[redacted – exemption applies]

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Document 5 – Email chain
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From: [redacted – exemption applies] **On Behalf Of** First Minister
Sent: 28 September 2017 10:36
To: Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills; [redacted – exemption applies]
Cc: Communications DFM & Education; [redacted – exemption applies] Bruce A (Andrew); [redacted – exemption applies] ; Hicks C (Clare); [redacted – exemption applies] ; Robertson FMG (Fiona); First Minister
Subject: URGENT - Briefing request for First Minister

[redacted – exemption applies]

Grateful if you could please provide a 1-2 page briefing note for the First Minister outlining what the SG will be publishing on the National Standardised Assessment and how this relates to the data from the latest CfE levels.

It would be helpful if this briefing could please be provided by 4pm today.

Happy to discuss further.

Kindest regards

[redacted – exemption applies]

From: [redacted – exemption applies])
Sent: 28 September 2017 16:27
To: First Minister; Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills
Cc: Communications DFM & Education; [redacted – exemption applies] ; Robertson FMG (Fiona); [redacted – exemption applies] ; Wilson M (Mick)
Subject: RE: URGENT - Briefing request for First Minister

[redacted – exemption applies]

2 page briefing note attached (it's actually a little on to a third page, sorry!) Apologies for the delay.

[redacted – exemption applies]

BRIEFING NOTE

[redacted – 15 paragraphs – exemption applies]-

Learning Directorate
September 2017

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Document 6 – Email chain
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From: [redacted – exemption applies]
Sent: 12 October 2017 12:52
To: [redacted – exemption applies]
Subject: RE: SNSA National Level Data Requirement

For awareness – we are in the process of negotiating a contract variation with ACER which takes into account the change in position of data processing (the SG changed from a data controller to a data processor) as part of that contract variation it is specified what data outputs we can take and it is referenced as follows:

6. Outputs

In addition to the SNSA assessment results, ACER shall, upon request of SG and / or the Council, provide anonymised reports to SG and / or the Council which may include all anonymised SNSA Data to allow trend analysis to be conducted.

Once signed this will override the what is reflected in the contract currently. However, this variation has not yet been signed.

[redacted – exemption applies]

From: [redacted – exemption applies]
Sent: 12 October 2017 12:43
To: [redacted – exemption applies]
Cc: [redacted – exemption applies]
Subject: SNSA National Level Data Requirement

[redacted – exemption applies]

These are the requirements that were in the ITT which pertain to the SG/Ministers obtaining SNSA information.

[redacted – exemption applies] – copying you in just in case there are other areas of the ITT SoR you feel may be applicable.

3.15	National level data Summary national level data will be made available to the Scottish Government and Education Scotland.
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3.16	<p>Pupil level dataset</p> <p>The Scottish Government will have the ability to receive a full dataset (in an acceptable and agreed format) of the results of the assessments at pupil level for each school year. The full scope and format of the data will be agreed between the Scottish Government and the Service Provider and is likely to include pupil level assessment results (age of pupil when assessment was taken, date assessment was taken, raw score, standardised score and age norm – all for each of reading, writing and numeracy), unique pupil identification numbers (such as Scottish Candidate Numbers) and pupil characteristics (as detailed in requirement 2.18).</p> <p>Once pupils have taken the assessments more than once, longitudinal analysis of pupil progress will be included in any data sets supplied to the Scottish Government.</p>
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Regards

[redacted – exemption applies]