

From: [Redacted S.38(i)(b)]
Sent: 11 June 2020 16:49
To: Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>
Subject: Matters arising from FOI request

From
[Redacted S.38(i)(b)]

To
Ms Lesley Evans
Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government
Edinburgh

11th June 2020

Dear Ms Evans

I write to you in your capacity as the Head of the Civil Service in Scotland

I recently submitted a Freedom of Information request and I have since received the response within the time set out in the FOI legislation, reference 202000037203

My request was :

Under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 I request that the Scottish Government, for the period 1st January 2016 to 31st December, 2019, provide and publish the following information :

The number of hours spent by the Civil Servants of the Scottish Government in preparation of papers, plans and any other documents relating to the policy of the Government for Independence for Scotland

For the period 1st January 2020 to 30th April 2020 the number of hours spent by the Civil Servants of the Scottish Government in preparation of papers, plans and any other documents relating to the policy of the Government for Independence for Scotland

The reply was that the Scottish Government did not have the information requested. Also it stated that there was a "pause" on work on independence due to Covid 19.

Prior to the coronavirus crisis I recall reading that you had stated that the work being done by the civil service on preparation of independence papers was detracting from the day-to-day work required to run Scotland, or words to that effect. To be able to make such a comment indicates that you had information as to how much time was being spent on the independence project. That you are aware of how much time had been spent on preparation of independence papers etc, I am puzzled as to why such information was not provided in the FOI response.

From experience of previous FOI requests to the Scottish Government I am not surprised that they have stated that they do not have the information I requested. Scottish ministers appear to resist

release of any information , certainly in the first instance, and only after review or resort to the Information Commissioner can the information be obtained.

As it would appear that you have knowledge of the time spent by your civil servants on independence matters I kindly ask that you make it available to fulfil my FOI request.

It is my intention to request a review of the response as is my right under the legislation

It is concerning if there is no record kept of time spent on specific projects by civil servants. I would have thought that it would be good management practice, within the Scottish civil service, that there was a monitoring system of all work undertaken. I am sure that such records are held by the various directors who are responsible to you. If this is NOT the case then I would be interested to know why and as would, I imagine, the Scottish Parliament .

I would be grateful if you would review the matters I have raised and I look forward to your reply

Yours sincerely

[Redacted S.38(i)(b)]