FOI **202500490388**

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 20

We're having a bad month for FOI timeliness – so far 28 have been issued late, and our response rate has already fallen below 95%. As we remain under statutory intervention by the Scottish Information Commissioner, and they are currently conducting our latest assessment, this is a worrying development.

We are having a big push to ensure that no further cases go late in August, and I would appreciate you doing all that you can to support this. Everyone with a case due over the next week and a half will get an email from our Deputy Director Lorna Gibbs, copied to their manager and DG office, to highlight the importance of issuing on time. DG offices are also being contacted, and Directors are being briefed tomorrow by our Director, Andy Bruce.

Over the next few days we will be having a look at what has gone wrong this month. While there has been a bit of a surge in sensitive cases, initially it does not appear to be anything that SG has not managed to cope with in the past. Even if we were not in intervention, each case that goes late is breaching our legislative obligation to respond in a maximum of 20 days and we need to be doing all that we can to get responses to requesters as quickly as we can.

In the meantime, please ensure that you are completing the FOI Weekly Tracker accurately and flag potential problems early, so we can support you if you might have problems meeting your deadline. We can sometimes step in and help with advisors, Private Offices or other people in the approval chain if there are any delays.

We all know that keeping the FOIs flowing is not an easy job. We get our own case load in the FOI Unit so we get to see both sides of this situation! However we have proven over the past couple of years that we can do this, and I would appreciate everyone's efforts over the next few days to get our response rate back to normal.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 20

It's important that case handlers don't feel isolated. Answering an FOI always involves a degree of team work. Please don't hesitate to ask for help if you need it.

Every case counts and never more so than in these circumstances.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21

I'm incredibly grateful for the FOI team's support and guidance over the past couple of weeks their advice has been consistently excellent, and it's made a real difference during a particularly busy period.

That said, the volume of EIR/FOI requests and subsequent reviews we've experienced over the last two months has highlighted some challenges, at least for me, in the current system. This isn't a reflection on the team or their work, which has been outstanding, but rather on the broader process we're required to follow within SG. For example a short spike in work now means most of my week has been spent dedicated to FOI/EIR reviews. This ripple effect is felt throughout our division and means work I should have been doing this week is now late, overdue or building up in to future weeks.

Coming from other government departments, I've been struck by the absence of centralised functions for FOI coordination and the limited use of tools like Microsoft Purview, which could help streamline searches and improve consistency. Instead, we rely on local contacts, email chains, and the business manager network approaches that can be difficult to manage, especially during peak leave periods.

Given these pressures, it might be worth revisiting how we approach FOI/EIR handling to ensure resilience and efficiency across the organisation.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] I have not heard of Microsoft Purview before and looked it up after reading your comment, at a quick glance it looks intriguing.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] In a nut shell, I used it in a previous department to conduct searches. It was capable of searching all emails, and all teams messages for specific key words and gave an output (I think it was a PDF when I got it) it was done by simply raising the equivalent of an iFix ticket and I had a response in 3 days with a lot of information to sift through! Very useful for Subject Access Requests too.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21

Hi,

We are handling a question from a multi area response and it took a week to find us. It's a fairly big one for us, so losing that week wasn't particularly helpful. The question subject matter should have made it easy to find us. We should manage it as it shouldn't be sensitive but had it been, we would have really struggled.

So perhaps there is an issue in how these are searched? Any we have had previously on this subject have come to us quickly.

Thanks

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21

This is the reality of being continually asked to do more, with less. It is not sustainable and requires a complete corporate rethink to ensure there is adequate resource and the correct tools to meet the demands placed across the organisation, including for legislative requirements such as FOI/EIR. "Prioritisation" means nothing when everything is deemed a priority and the organisation is already struggling with the current caseload, which will only increase further particularly with an election year ahead.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21

Very much agree & I'd add to that by saying that well meaning FOI / EIR legislation is being exploited in some (or perhaps many) cases where it's being used as a fishing exercise by journalists looking to fill column inches or attract clicks. I would like to see a change made where there has to be a specific reason for requests rather than lots of spurious ones in the hope of uncovering something by chance.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21

Edited [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] our area has escalated the multiple requests by journalists more than once. It is very frustrating when questions come in multiple times with slight tweaks to wording or date ranges. Even the time taken to reply to say it breaches the cost limit is a drain of staff resource.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21

Noting the impact on prioritisation (where responding to FOI's often means day-to-day tasks and delivery have to go on hold or be delayed), I think there are instances where we're over-complicating process and making things far harder and more time-consuming that they need to be. For example, when we receive an FOI requesting information from a Scottish Council (so SG didn't hold the the information requested, and we simply advise the requester to contact that council directly), we still have to complete three documents (the Searches Template, Statement of Compliance, and Submission & Decision Template) and secure DD approval to publish. This is clearly disproportionate and surely adds no value for any party involved?

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

When we refuse a request because we do not hold the requested information, we have to be able to provide evidence that that is the case.

Our regulator, the Scottish Information Commissioner explains that here:

Para 34

"In all cases, it falls to an authority to persuade the Commissioner, with reference to adequate, relevant descriptions and evidence, that it does not hold the information (or holds no more information than it has identified and located in response to the request)".

We are increasingly being asked at appeal to provide this in the form of screen shots or spreadsheets as well as our searches template. We realise this takes time but it is an essential part of the FOI process.

In the circumstances you describe though, the Statement of Compliance and submission for a decision can be kept brief. It might also be helpful to note that (especially where we do not hold the information) clearance to issue could be provided by a local colleague at C-band level if this would speed the process.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21

My team received an FOI at the end of last week, one of those multiple question ones where different questions get allocated to different teams. By the time we got our question, there were only 15 days left to respond.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21

At a time when Ministers are very focused on ensuring delivery of key priorities in the coming months and putting (appropriate) pressure on civil servants to deliver these priorities, staff are working a week which is 5% shorter than this time last year and staff have been instructed to ensure leave balances are ten days or under by year end with the effect that… maybe there are reasons why FoI performance has dipped a bit in the summer. It would be helpful to understand the sheer amount of time spent on FoI within the SG by staff - it must be significant given the nature of FoIs being received these days

and the use, within the law, that FoI is being put to by some users of the legislation. Without that understanding, I am afraid a message of "drop everything, do FoIs" feels a little hollow to me

Alice Biggins

Aug 21

No criticism of the FOI team (I can't begin to imagine what a thankless task it must feel like a lot of time) but I think the overall approach is unsustainable, and wrote to my union in those terms just yesterday:

I'm writing to raise a concern about the current FOI system and the burden it is placing on teams. I've previously written to you about PQs, and FOIs seem to be another example where the current system is no longer compatible with the world we're living in, and is vulnerable to exploitation. In the case of PQs, it was the (suspected) use of AI to produce dozens of questions, bringing the work of one of my teams to a halt for upwards of a week. Now it is FOIs. We have seen an increase in how many we are receiving, sometimes they're legitimately for food and drink, sometimes they come our way because there is no one else who will take them on. In all cases, they take up a lot of time (in already stretched teams). The system was designed in a different age and now I think it is vulnerable to people or groups who can use it to take up staff time, with, as far as I can tell, no checks or balances. For example, we are currently dealing with three from a consultant working for an Australian bakery company. To reply, members of the team are having to go back into paper files and manually scan relevant documents. I'm conscious that there is a possibility to invoke a cost limit but the bar for being able to do that seems very high. Is this a good use of public money?

Is the provision of information to literally anyone in the world who's minded to write in a higher priority than our normal work? That is the message that seems to be coming across in the ways FOIs are currently handled. I can't see any reason why people requesting information shouldn't need to be based in the UK. Further, given the currently zero barrier to anyone requesting an FOI, I don't think it will be too long before people/organisations with sinister intent start to exploit the system, as it's currently wide open to abuse. Now would be a good time to introduce at least some sort of ID check – perhaps along the lines of that now being introduced across a range of websites. We really are getting to the stage where for some of my teams, servicing FOIs is surpassing all our other goals, and I'm not sure this is a decision that would be consciously made by ministers.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21

Alice Biggins

We were stung by this too. We received x5 PQ's and around 8 FOI and EIR's in the same week. Thankfully colleagues from other areas supported us and we shared the load but all you need is 1 week when your area is in the news for whatever reason to be totally drowning.

Every EIR/FOI review I am doing right now has been written by AI. And if the requestor had sent them as one email we'd have refused it but because they sent 8 separate emails...its fine.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21

The issue I have is the increasing utilisation of FOI/EIR as another tool in the political toolbox. I have seen numerous examples of the same party asking a question by Ministerial correspondence, then by PQ, via the press and finally by FOI/EIR. The answer, which they clearly don't like, remains the same but the cumulative impact on workloads is never discussed.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22

Alice Biggins and others - there was a case near the start of FoI/EIR that one organisation sent a significant number of emails over a short period of time (in the hundreds) - the commissioner at the time deemed that Vexatious.

8 emails would not qualify but it is something to keep in mind.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21

I wanted to reflect on this, because while I completely recognise the importance of FOIs I also find the way this message is framed quite dispiriting. I feel like there's a subtle

implication here that staff are not already doing all that we can, when in reality many of us are already going above and beyond to try to meet deadlines.

It is also impossible not to be aware of the importance of FOIs when we are required to provide constant updates, chase progress through multiple layers of sign off, and then respond to repeated reminders and prods. The pressure is already there every day. The real question is why the framework itself is not coming under scrutiny, when it is the framework that creates these impossible situations?

The 20 day clock begins from the date an FOI is submitted to SG, and not from the point it actually reaches the relevant team. I've seen requests circulate internally for several days before landing with case handlers, immediately cutting into the already tight timeframe. In some cases up to a quarter of the time is taken up just before finding a handler.

On top of that, the approach to multi-part requests is a serious problem in my opinion. I have personally dealt with requests containing nine separate questions which fall within the same policy area, and don't meet the criteria to be aggregated. Under FOISA rules, each part is assessed individually against the £600 cost threshold. The effect of this is contradictory; a single question estimated at 41 hours can be refused outright, yet up to 9 separate questions each taking 35 hours, amounting to over 315 hours of work, cannot? All must still be completed within the same 20 day deadline. In pure mathematical terms, this is impossible. A staff member has about 140 working hours in a month; no amount of working harder can overcome that structural gap. Are we expecting entire teams of people to put absolutely everything on hold for a month to complete a single FOI request?

There is also no formal mechanism for triaging when the competing priorities are multiple FOIs themselves. Every request carries the same statutory weight, with no flexibility based on volume or complexity. The practical outcome is that people feel compelled to work late nights or set aside other essential work simply to keep FOIs moving. The legislation is rigid and has a very real impact on wellbeing.

That is why it feels disheartening to read language that suggests we must "do all that you can." For many of us, we already are, but the framework itself is inflexible, and at times mathematically impossible to meet.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] By working beyond our contractual 35 hours in order to meet all of the competing deadlines we only compound the problems later on in the year when numerous people are rightfully on leave to reduce flexi balances. It is a never ending cycle.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] The point around separate requests really vexes me. Like I said in a previous message. SG got 8 requests all within minutes of each other from the same requestor.

Had they been in one email it would have been outright refused. I explicitly requested if we could amalgamate into one request and reject based on this and was informed that this was not possible.

Like you say, the cost to SG is the same.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] This happened to me a while ago. Within about a week, right in the middle of Christmas holidays, I received from the same requester about 80 individual requests, all worded similarly on the same subject but about different Ministers and different dates. That meant 80 research exercises, 80 unique responses to write including determining exemptions, 160 compliance documents, plus the burden on my line management chain to approve everything.

I was told I could not respond in aggregate, nor refuse in aggregate, nor was the requester being vexatious because they were different requests. In fact, I was told I would just have to find the time to complete them all, and if that meant working till midnight and cancelling personal engagements then I would just have to do that.

I was able to find enough resource to respond on time to every one of them, because that was my duty as a good civil servant but at what cost? The cost of neither me nor my

direct report doing our own jobs for the entire time, and certainly the cost of my own wellbeing. I for one was completely burned out afterwards. I know of others who have found themselves in similar situations, where our sense of duty and a job well done is being taken advantage of and the only reward is tacit acknowledgement that our cases weren't late.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 21

Are there any graphs and figures associated with this over the past few years. It would be interesting to compare monthly rates over time and also to spot if there is any seasonality involved, for example. Also we have to be careful when talking about percentages because that can be misleading without looking at absolute numbers.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22

I'm very interested by the approach taken in this post. To email case officers and copy in their hierarchy implies the belief that case officers aren't doing enough and that the problem can be solved by telling them to hurry up and try harder. I'd be interested in understanding the evidence behind this approach. As the various comments on this post, and my own experience of case officers working so hard on FOIs that wellbeing becomes a real concern show, I think the issue here is the volume of FOI and the need to take an overarching and strategic approach to triage and management, and to resourcing FOI requests. When you add in the implications of both delayed allocation and the ten days handling time required for sensitive FOIs, case handlers often have less time to work on the FOI than spads and ministers to approve. I'd be interested to hear more about creative, strategic solutions government-wide to this problem, rather than telling the folk who are already struggling to work harder.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 26 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] I was assigned an FOI ages ago that ended up being assigned to another team, I was shocked to find a few weeks later an email that had gone straight to my DD (not even to me/my LM) saying I hadn't filled in the correct compliance docs. It wasn't even my case! So I worry about this approach happening to others.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22

There are many good points being made in this thread regarding the need to review the processes for FOI. If there is going to be a review of those processes, it would be wise to take a step back and consider if the current approach to FOI compliance is drawing away resources from work required to deliver the Programme for Government and numerous other strategies that will have an impact on people's lives, such as Creating a healthier Scotland - gov.scot I really appreciate the challenges that FOI brings and the work involved, but perhaps a less risk averse approach would be a practical way forward.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] Is there a sense in which FOIs are viewed as an add on to the day job? If FOIs are a priority, then other things won't get done. Or they won't get done in the time expected, or to the required quality. Perhaps there needs to be a more honest acceptance of this. It seems to be a perpetual problem, so I agree, a more strategic view needs to be taken.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] You are right that a lot of good points have been made here. What is clear is that FOI is causing significant stress for teams that are already busy trying to deliver on PfG commitments etc. I have seen only recently how much pressure FOI requests can put on people and so the suggestion that things are "going wrong" and we just need to do better, when we know that the number of FOI requests is increasing hugely and the requests themselves are becoming more difficult, is really rather disappointing.

I appreciate that we have a statutory responsibility in this area but surely we shouldn't just blindly accept a continuation of the current processes. Do we really think that responding to someone's vague queries from the other side of the world, or a random email sent by someone possibly sitting at the back of a bus, is a good use of our time and taxpayers' money?

I think there has always been a question about how fit for purpose the FOI legislation is, but it certainly needs reviewed now that we are operating in a very different world to 2002. If there is no appetite for that and we are stuck with it then at the very least we need to review our procedures and allow for greater flexibility, wherever possible, to enable teams to cope with the ever-growing number of cases. Either that or set up FOI teams to deal with these cases and let other staff get on with delivering the policy work that Ministers demand. Everything cannot be a priority. If we were the "kind" organisation we profess to be then we would have tackled this before now.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] I agree with your suggestion about setting up FOI Teams. If you're not routinely dealing with FOIs, a big time consumer is (re)familiarising yourself with an incredibly clunky system and its various assurance processes. I accept that the assurance piece is required, but when you take account of that, the possible requirement to bring in SPADs, senior officials, Ministers, it really eats into the case handler's time, much of which is spent poring over guidance and having exchanges with the FOI Unit (my experience of dealing with the FOI Unit has been nothing but excellent).

A central team (or teams) would need to cooperate with the relevant policy area(s), and that area(s) would need to prioritise cooperation. But personally that would feel less stressful to me than what we have currently.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22

I remember most of the FoIs I received in the past further back tended to request specific information, it was clear what was being asked for and I could often get responses out in good time. These days the majority seem to be effectively fishing exercises asking for all correspondence and/or all notes on 'a' or 'b'. You then spend hours doing nothing more than redacting names out of emails. Whilst I fully recognise this is a statutory duty, I can't be alone in thinking it's not a particularly productive use of time.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 26 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] would a possible solution to this be to publish FOI responses immediately as they're issued? That way everyone in the world has access to the information at the same time; no one gets the exclusive.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22

Hopefully the new redaction software helps with this ask.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] In the short term I'm sure it will. but every new efficiency tool is like building more roads to alleviate traffic congestion. Unfortunately, FOISA doesn't make allowances for the efficiency (or inefficiency) of an organisation's ability to deal with the administrative burden of responding to requests.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] This sounds important. Is this like the question, if you create efficiency savings, what to do with the freed up time? Because there can be a tendency to just fill it up again with something, which might not always be the best approach. Or even worse, somebody else spots it and fills it up with something! All in favour of efficiency savings though.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 25 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] My concern is the way some things seem to leak to the media. The SG has a new super-power redaction tool, you say? Well then, let's have a field day sending in even more requests!

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] Some areas in SG do have timesheets. SASA does. Not sure they tend to have the complicated FOIs though they certainly do get them, they are just usually a bit more straightforward data questions.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] Beyond doubt, getting a financial cost and time taken should be a major first objective. Like a lot of things it's hidden in the dept budgets. But not sure staff would welcome filling out yet more sheets as well as doing the FOI?

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] Hi [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] I'd suggest not creating another timesheet. The organisation can make an approximate calculation of the time being consumed by FOI if necessary (I've done that elsewhere before), but it seems obvious that the current approach is adding to the task. I'd suggest examining the current processes to look for opportunities to simplify processes and eliminate waste, such as using LEAN techniques. The 8 Wastes of Lean: Understanding and Addressing Them in Your Organization - isixsigma.com If we normally satisfy a request efficiently and satisfactorily, we wouldn't need to prove on every occasion what our process has been.

The 8 Wastes of Lean: Understanding and Addressing Them in Your Organization - isixsigma.com

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] This may be going a bit off piste, but I think the SG is really, really bad at the following two:

Overproduction: Producing more than the customer or your process needs results in excess inventory and all the expenses described above under Inventory.

Overprocessing: Doing more than the customer wants, needs, or is willing to pay for.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 22

I sometimes feel that we over complicate things by dealing with requests as FOI/EIRs when they are simply a question. We have had a few recently where somebody has asked for an update on actions from a report and we have asked for that to be changed to general correspondence but it was refused because the person has referred to FOI a couple of times in their request so rather than "here's a response to your question" you have to top and tail with all the bumpf that comes with an FOI/EIR response about right to review etc. we also get ones where the request is for information which we already have online but then instead of just being able to respond in a sentence and include a link they get a 2 page response applying exceptions, right to review etc. with all of this comes the added work of completing compliance documents and clearance.

We used to be able to determine what was classed as an FOI/EIR and what was business as usual but that discretion seems to have been removed. I sometimes feel like we are trying to class as much as FOI/EIRs in order to boost numbers and mitigate the effect of late cases.

Finally, 20 days is challenging enough for routine cases without the added pressure of a sensitive case requiring input from SPADs and Ministers.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 25

"While there has been a bit of a surge in sensitive cases, initially it does not appear to be anything that SG has not managed to cope with in the past."

I suppose the main crux here is that workloads continue to increase whilst team resources continue to be squeezed through prioritisation exercises. In directorates where other statutory (and essential front line "keeping the lights on") work gets carried out that means something has to give, and in some cases unfortunately that will be FOIs.

To echo a comment from another colleague earlier in the thread "If everything is a priority, then nothing is."

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 25

When examining "what has gone wrong this month", it might also be worth considering whether the decision to use a platform that is FOI-able was the most appropriate mechanism for highlighting dissatisfaction at not meeting FOI deadlines.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 26

Posts like this always leave a really bad taste in my mouth. Essentially, "you're not working hard enough even though we're giving you less resource to do it".

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 26

I agree with a lot of what has been said within these comments.

I have found the FOI Team always to be superb and extremely helpful.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 26 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] 100% agree [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] - they are all really really helpful

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 27 [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] is there an identifiable reason for the drop in response time? Anecdotally I've heard that generative AI might be used to churn out FOI requests en masse, which makes me wonder if the issue then is a step increase in volume? Despite FOI teams' best efforts, such a development would suggest this issue might become more severe over time.

**FOI and EIR deadlines**

The following privilege holidays are not recognised under Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) legislation.

- Edinburgh 12 September (PM), 15 September 2025
- Aberdeen 19 September (PM), 22 September 2025
- Glasgow 26 September (PM), 29 September 2025

The due dates listed on MiCase are correct and responses to FOI and EIR requests should be issued in line with these.

If you have a request that is marked sensitive, requiring a Ministerial decision over the holiday period, you should allow extra time for clearance.

Please ensure sufficient time is allocated for responses to be issued on time.

Managers should support their teams to respond to all requests promptly.

DRAFT

**From: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]**

**Sent:** 29 August 2025 15:58

**To: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]**

**Cc: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)];** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

**Subject:** RE: FOI Unit Comms Activity - Leadership Brief

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up

**Flag Status:** Completed

No problem [Redacted S.38(1)(b)], completely get your points – I think for Leadership Brief we're fine to be a bit more direct and formal with our call to action but we could also run an item in News in Brief for all staff and soften the tone a bit there. I'll run it by my TL who has final editorial say on these things and see what she thinks too.

Have a lovely weekend, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Sent:** 29 August 2025 15:55
**To:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Cc:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** RE: FOI Unit Comms Activity - Leadership Brief

Thanks [Redacted S.38(1)(b)], much appreciated.

It does come across very formal now and I am conscious of the current feelings on FOI across the business, however happy to defer to internal comms on format and tone. The content is correct for our interests.

The template we normally use, in link below, had previously been drafted by comms but happy to discuss this going forward.

Many thanks

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Head of FOI Improvement

FOI Unit | Improving Public Engagement Division | Scottish Government

**Viva Engage:** @FOI Community | **FOI Guidance:** Freedom of information (FOI)

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Sent:** 29 August 2025 14:47
**To:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** RE: FOI Unit Comms Activity

Hi [Redacted S.38(1)(b)],

I have tweaked the Leadership Brief a little bit, if you are happy with the text below I'll add it to our draft document. It will still need to undergo our usual editorial process but you will be sighted on any changes before we publish.

Many thanks, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

**FOI and EIR deadlines**

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Please ensure sufficient time is allocated for responses to be issued on time.

Managers should support their teams to respond to all requests promptly.

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]
**Sent:** 28 August 2025 12:09
**To:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]  [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** RE: FOI Unit Comms Activity

Fab, thanks [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]! I'll take a look at our diaries now and pop some time in.  [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]  [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Sent:** 28 August 2025 12:08
**To:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]  [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** RE: FOI Unit Comms Activity

Thanks [Redacted S.38(1)(b)], that would be great. [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] is on leave next week but I would be pleased to put something in the diary.

Thanks

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]  [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Sent:** 28 August 2025 11:54

**To:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** RE: FOI Unit Comms Activity

Good morning [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] and [Redacted S.38(1)(b)],

We can absolutely include your item in next week's Leadership Brief. I'll have a look at the draft and return it to you tomorrow with any edits. And thank you for flagging upcoming activity too, especially the Information Commissioner's report.

Do you mind if I set up a meeting for the three of us next week to discuss, and then we decide when best suits to have a regular catch-up? I'm happy to meet more often than six-weekly given what you have coming up. Let me know what you think.

Many thanks, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

**Senior Internal Communications Manager**

Marketing, Insight, Brand Scotland and Internal Communications | Scottish Government

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Sent:** 28 August 2025 10:26
**To:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** RE: FOI Unit Comms Activity

Good morning [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Further to [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]'s email below, we are hoping to get an item in leadership brief next Thursday highlighting the FOI dates and the privilege holidays.

We have drafted a paragraph similar to what we normally use, but appreciate timelines are quite short.

Please see the following link for content : FOI and EIR deadlines - September Holidays.docx

In addition we have a number of interesting items coming up over the next couple of months that we would be keen to work with internal comms on.

Thanks

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Head of FOI Improvement

FOI Unit | Improving Public Engagement Division | Scottish Government

**Viva Engage:** @FOI Community | **FOI Guidance:** Freedom of information (FOI)

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Sent:** 27 August 2025 12:29
**To:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Cc:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** FOI Unit Comms Activity

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Trust you are well.

I am making contact to see if we can arrange a catch up to discuss some comms activity we will have regarding FOI. We used to have regular catch ups with [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] on a six weekly basis when we would discuss things on the

horizon in terms of FOI and Improvement activity where we would schedule a timetable for communicating this to the wider SG.

You will have seen our Viva Engage post last week regarding the drop in the number of FOI and EIRs being issued late. This was mentioned at Andy's Directorate huddle on Monday morning. There has been a lot of activity following this Viva Engage post and our SMT are currently deciding how to respond to these. There may be a need to have some other comms on this possibly via the leadership brief reminding colleagues of FOI timescales and our legal responsibilities. The other Viva Engage post last week was the change in how requests are triaged and allocated to case handlers. It would be good to have a way to communicate this to colleagues as we are conscious not everyone checks Viva Engage.

Also on the horizon is the Scottish Information Commissioner's report on SG's performance and practice intervention. This report is expected in September. We will need to consider the recommendations from this report, but there will be a need to communicate the Commissioner's findings. Thinking ahead there is the International Right to Know day on 28 September 2025 and last year had a spotlight article around this with input from other colleagues.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Freedom of Information Improvement Team

Freedom of Information Unit

Area 1E-10

St. Andrews House

Edinburgh

EH1 3DG

FOI **202500490388**

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Sent:** 19 August 2025 17:28
**To:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Lorna Gibbs <Lorna.Gibbs@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** RE: Late cases - August push

Hi all,

Please see attached list of the 29 late cases in August so far. I've pulled over the comments from the DG Tracker in column L that may be useful when looking into why these went late.

Kind regards,

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)] | FOI Adviser

FOI Unit | Improving Public Engagement Division | Scottish Government

**Viva Engage:** @FOI Community | **FOI Guidance:** Freedom of information (FOI)

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Sent:** 19 August 2025 16:35
**To:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Lorna Gibbs <Lorna.Gibbs@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** Late cases - August push
**Importance:** High

Hi all – thanks for the time and discussions this afternoon. Here's a quick summary of what we're planning to do to try and stop our performance rate slipping too much further, and also to support senior briefing on this. All actions are asap/urgent.

- Response rate management: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] to coordinate a letter to all case-handlers with outstanding cases in August, in Lorna's name, copied to the manager and DG office of each casehandler. [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] to support the drafting, Lorna to approve. [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] to write out (with [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] approving) to all DG offices alerting them to the issue and asking them to make sure the FOI Weekly Tracker is kept meaningfully updated, and also to support the FOI allocation process when correctly allocated [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] to draft a VE piece, approved Lorna, to alert case handlers to the risk. [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] to send the latest figures first thing – 9 am ish – on Thursday (21) morning, ahead of Andy Bruce speaking at Directors on Thursday morning. Send to Lorna, copied to us all. Lorna to brief Andy.

- Explaining and managing the results: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] to send to [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] a spreadsheet with all the late cases so far and their reasons – as far as we know [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] to ask [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] to take a look, and [Redacted S.38(1)(b)], **[Redacted S.38(1)(b)] and [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]** (with support from Improvement Team as necessary) to look for patterns and investigate reasons, and start to draft a short report on what happened.
- Our next meeting with Lesley Fraser is first thing next Tuesday, 26 August. [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] to note and ensure that we have the monthly stats compiled and with [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] by lunchtime on Friday (22).

Thanks all – we'll get there,

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Head of FOI Unit

Mob: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

FOI Unit | Improving Public Engagement Division | Scottish Government

My working days are Tues-Fri

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]
**Sent:** 20 August 2025 14:22
**To:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** RE: Timeliness VE Post for today from me

Thanks both – I'll get it live

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Sent:** 20 August 2025 13:50
**To:** Lorna Gibbs <Lorna.Gibbs@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** RE: Timeliness VE Post for today from me

Looks good [Redacted S.38(1)(b)].

Will you add it to FOI and All Company please? We normally do both.

I've added a comma, but nothing more.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

**From:** Lorna Gibbs <Lorna.Gibbs@gov.scot>;
**Sent:** 20 August 2025 13:16
**To:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** RE: Timeliness VE Post for today from me

Hi

As we will, hopefully, be out of intervention soon I have suggested adding in some wording reminding people that they ought to be answering on time regardless. I want to avoid any future thinking that we won't care about deadlines after the intervention ends. That apart, I am content.

Lorna

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Sent:** 20 August 2025 13:08
**To:** Lorna Gibbs <Lorna.Gibbs@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** Timeliness VE Post for today from me

Hi both – comments welcome on the below, which I'll post on VE this afternoon once we have a draft we're happy with.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

We're having a bad month for FOI timeliness – so far 28 have been issued late, and our response rate has already fallen below 95%. As we remain under statutory intervention by the Scottish Information Commissioner, and they are currently conducting our latest assessment, this is a worrying development. Even if we were not in intervention, each case that goes late is breaching our legislative obligation to respond in a maximum of 20 days and we need to be doing all that we can to get responses to requesters as quickly as we can.

We are having a big push to ensure that no further cases go late in August, and I would appreciate you doing all that you can to support this.

Everyone with a case due over the next week and a half will get an email from our Deputy Director Lorna Gibbs, copied to their manager and DG office, to highlight the importance of issuing on time. DG offices are also being contacted, and Directors are being briefed tomorrow by our Director, Andy Bruce.

Over the next few days we will be having a look at what has gone wrong this month. While there has been a bit of a surge in sensitive cases, initially it does not appear to be anything that SG has not managed to cope with in the past.

In the meantime, please ensure that you are completing the FOI Weekly Tracker accurately and flag potential problems early, so we can support you if you might have problems meeting your deadline. We can sometimes step in and help with advisors, Private Offices or other people in the approval chain if there are any delays.

We all know that keeping the FOIs flowing is not an easy job. We get our own case load in the FOI Unit so we get to see both sides of this situation! However we have proven over the past couple of years that we can do this, and I would appreciate everyone's efforts over the next few days to get our response rate back to normal.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Head of FOI Unit

Mob: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

FOI Unit | Improving Public Engagement Division | Scottish Government

My working days are Tues-Fri

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]
**Sent:** 29 August 2025 16:11
**To:** Lorna Gibbs <Lorna.Gibbs@gov.scot>;
**Subject:** FW: FOI timeliness

Lorna I've not replied to this one. I did have a helpful discussion with [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] a few weeks ago when the cases started about the VQ nursery.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Sent:** 21 August 2025 09:05
**To:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]  [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** FOI timeliness

Hi [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

I saw your recent Viva Engage post regarding FOI performance and felt compelled to reach out.

Several FOIs directed to my team are currently overdue. We've had to bring in support from across the directorate to assist a small team of three, which has effectively ground to a halt due to a colleague submitting multiple inquiries. These FOIs, which appear to be vexatious in nature, stem from a decision that has had a personal and emotional impact on him, and have placed an unsustainable burden on the team.

As a result, contracts worth over £9 million per annum have not received the necessary oversight and attention, as resources have been diverted to FOI responses. The personal toll on individuals has been significant, with SG now funding support and counselling to help mitigate the impact of this workload and the wider targeted commentary. In an organisation whose values include "being kind," this situation is deeply concerning and, frankly, unacceptable.

I understand that my DD, [Redacted S.38(1)(b)], has already contacted you regarding this issue. I would also note that my management chain, up to DG level, has been very supportive and understanding of the stress this has caused. We will not be responding to your DD's letter, as we are fully aware of the outstanding FOIs and have done everything within our power to collate and respond where possible.

Having worked in several UK Government departments over the past 20+ years, I must say that FOI case handling within SG feels particularly fraught and unsustainable. I've never encountered anything quite like it. Is there anything further that can be done to protect and support our people in these circumstances?

Kind Regards

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)] MIWFM - Head of Facilities Services

Workplace Division - Scottish Government [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot

**From:** [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]
**Sent:** 21 August 2025 16:19
**To:** Permanent Secretary <PermanentSecretary@gov.scot>
**Cc:** Andrew Bruce <Andrew.Bruce@gov.scot>; Lorna Gibbs <Lorna.Gibbs@gov.scot>; Lesley Fraser <Lesley.Fraser@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [Redacted S.38(1)(b)] [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
**Subject:** FOI/EIR response rate challenge

Permanent Secretary

Thanks for your support as we try to push up our FOI/EIR request response rate for August.

As of today, 21 August, we have issued 325 requests, with 91% of them going out on time. For overall volume, August is if anything a little lower than average, with 496 cases, compared to 707 in July. There are 125 requests still due to be issued in August. We continue to actively engage with case handlers and chase outstanding cases, noting the varying levels of response that we receive from some case handlers. If all of those cases go on time our response rate will be 94%. If only 4 go late we will drop to 93%. Nineteen further late cases would reduce our performance to 90%.

Of the 31 cases that have gone late so far, there are no obvious reasons for the notable drop in performance. There are a group of 8 cases in MPO, mostly related to requests about Ministerial diaries. There are also smaller groups - of around 3-5 each - related to the NHS Fife trans/equalities tribunal and zonal pricing of electricity. The rest are single requests on a wide range of topics for different business areas. I am attaching a list of the cases that have gone late so far in August.

I am also attaching a standard report that we share with DG Corporate each month for your information, updated to today's position. This also shows:

- the response rate dropped to the lower 90s at the start of the month

- the late cases so far are in DG Corporate, DG Net Zero and DG Education and Justice.

While the immediate priority is to encourage complete compliance with the FOI statutory deadline for the rest of the month (and continuing), we are also beginning to look at the circumstances which have created this tipping point in August.

We currently provide monthly statistics to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner as part of the FOI intervention. It is unlikely, but not impossible, that a single month drop will influence the Commissioner's next intervention report which is due next month. However were this to become a pattern then we might very well see the Commissioner take further action.

In recent months the FOI Unit has noticed a growing cultural shift across SG to push back against requests allocated correctly to them. We are often told 'we don't have any more capacity'. We are urgently looking at whether this delayed allocation to the correct area is a factor in this month's performance, and will update DG Corporate next week.

Delays in allocation can also have direct cost implications. As part of the wider work IPED is doing to review the processes of all the correspondence products (PQs, FOIs and ministerial correspondence), analysts are in the process of establishing an "average cost" for completing each product. An example case, worked through as part of this exercise, has shown that refusal to accept ownership of a case can add as much as much as £270 to the cost of processing a single parliamentary question. This work is still ongoing, and the cost of allocating an FOI will be picked up as part of the next part of the process, along with potential opportunities to speed up allocation.

There are clearly wider systemic issues that also need to be considered. There is increased pressure on the system, with the number of FOI/EIR requests being received by SG increasing significantly from around 3,300 in 2020 to around 5,700 in 2024. So far this year (to the end of July) our monthly request volumes are up again by around 18% on the same point last year.

In Spring 2023 we achieved a significant and sustained shift in FOI performance, with the then Permanent Secretary JP Marks playing a highly influential role in performance. His prioritising of FOI performance with his DG team and ET, supported by our then new reporting tools, drove improved performance across the organisation, and the Permanent Secretary may wish to consider a similar approach to help the recovery of our current figures.

Kind regards,

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Head of FOI Unit

Mob: [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

FOI Unit | Improving Public Engagement Division | Scottish Government

My working days are Tues-Fri

**FOI 2025004930388**

**Viva Engage – FOI Community**

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 20

Hi folks, just giving [Redacted S.38(1)(b)]'s message below a little push. It's really important.

We're having a bad month for FOI timeliness – so far 28 have been issued late, and our response rate has already fallen below 95%. As we remain under statutory intervention by the Scottish Information Commissioner, and they are currently conducting our latest assessment, this is a worrying development.

We are having a big push to ensure that no further cases go late in August, and I would appreciate you doing all that you can to support this. Everyone with a case due over the next week and a half will get an email from our Deputy Director Lorna Gibbs, copied to their manager and DG office, to highlight the importance of issuing on time. DG offices are also being contacted, and Directors are being briefed tomorrow by our Director, Andy Bruce.

Over the next few days we will be having a look at what has gone wrong this month. While there has been a bit of a surge in sensitive cases, initially it does not appear to be anything that SG has not managed to cope with in the past. Even if we were not in intervention, each case that goes late is breaching our legislative obligation to respond in a maximum of 20 days and we need to be doing all that we can to get responses to requesters as quickly as we can.

In the meantime, please ensure that you are completing the FOI Weekly Tracker accurately and flag potential problems early, so we can support you if you might have problems meeting your deadline. We can sometimes step in and help with advisors, Private Offices or other people in the approval chain if there are any delays.

We all know that keeping the FOIs flowing is not an easy job. We get our own case load in the FOI Unit so we get to see both sides of this situation! However we have proven over the past couple of years that we can do this, and I would appreciate everyone's efforts over the next few days to get our response rate back to normal.

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)] and 9 others

[Redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Aug 20

Seen by 230

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| Reference | Casetype | Title | Case Owner | Director-General | Directorate | Division | Branch | Created | Issued | Due | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 202500474614 | FOI | Freedom of Information request - LGBT staff network discussions since 16 April | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR PEOPLE | DFP : Attraction and Resourcing | AR : DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION | 05 July 2025 | 06 August 2025 | 01 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500474736 | EIR Request | Letter from Graham Simpson MSP | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL ECONOMY | DIRECTORATE FOR PLANNING, ARCHITECTURE AND REGENERATION | DPAR : Planning and Development Delivery | PDD : Development Management and Compulsory Purchase | 04 July 2025 | 05 August 2025 | 01 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500474814 | FOI | FOI EHRC | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL COMMUNITIES | DIRECTORATE FOR EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS | DEIH : Equality | E : LGBTQI+, BSL, SIAL AND OLDER PEOPLE | 07 July 2025 | 06 August 2025 | 05 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500470399 | EIR Request | FMAR - (2) of 2: Impact zonal pricing may have on wind farm building in Scotland | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | DIRECTORATE FOR ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE | DECC : Onshore Electricity, Strategy and Consents | OESC : Whole Systems and Technical Policy Unit | 11 June 2025 | 08 August 2025 | 06 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500470433 | EIR Request | Meetings between SG, Alexander Dennis/NFI Group/NFI International Limited | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | TRANSPORT SCOTLAND | TS : ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY | TS : TS ECS, ENVIRONMENT | 11 June 2025 | 13 August 2025 | 06 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500474980 | FOI | Mingyang Smart Energy Group FOI | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL ECONOMY | DIRECTORATE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT | ITI : EXPORT AND INWARD INVESTMENT POLICY | EIIP : INWARD INVESTMENT POLICY | 08 July 2025 | 18 August 2025 | 06 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500474984 | FOI | FOI request - SQA chief exec | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL EDUCATION AND JUSTICE | DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION REFORM | DER : Education Reform | ER : New Quals Body, Bill Team and SQA Sponsorship | 08 July 2025 | | 06 August 2025 | In Process But Overdue |
| 202500474995 | FOI | FOI Request - agency spend using procurement scotland framework | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR PEOPLE | DFP : Attraction and Resourcing | | 08 July 2025 | 07 August 2025 | 06 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500470423 | EIR Request | All correspondence between SG and Alexander Dennis Ltd from January 2025 | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | TRANSPORT SCOTLAND | TS : ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY | TS : TS ECS, ENVIRONMENT | 12 June 2025 | 13 August 2025 | 07 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500475367 | FOI | FOI events at bute house | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | MPO : Logistics | 10 July 2025 | | 08 August 2025 | In Process But Overdue |
| 202500475371 | FOI | FOI neil gray football correspondence | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | MPO : Division Management Team | 10 July 2025 | 12 August 2025 | 08 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500475435 | EIR Request | Zonal Pricing for Electricity | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | DIRECTORATE FOR ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE | DECC : Onshore Electricity, Strategy and Consents | OESC : Whole Systems and Technical Policy Unit | 10 July 2025 | 19 August 2025 | 08 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| SEC-25-193 | FOI | Declarations of Interest & Secondary Employment (WMT) | | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | FORESTRY AND LAND SCOTLAND | | | 08 July 2025 | 06 August 2025 | 08 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500475615 | FOI | FOI - Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP and Neil Gray MSP met with the Equality and Human Rights Commission on or around 11 June 2025 | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL COMMUNITIES | DIRECTORATE FOR EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS | DEIH : Equality | E : LGBTQI+, BSL, SIAL AND OLDER PEOPLE | 12 July 2025 | 13 August 2025 | 11 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500479713 | EIR Request | Submission SG to UKG consultation re Allocation Round 7 of CfD scheme | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | DIRECTORATE FOR OFFSHORE WIND | DOW : Director of Offshore Wind | | 13 July 2025 | | 11 August 2025 | In Process But Overdue |
| 202500475593 | FOI | Single-sex toilets FOI | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL EDUCATION AND JUSTICE | DIRECTORATE FOR LEARNING | DLEARN : Workforce, Infrastructure and Digital | WID : School Funding, Infrastructure and Organisation | 14 July 2025 | 19 August 2025 | 12 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500475893 | FOI | Freedom of Information request - Lossiemouth | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL EDUCATION AND JUSTICE | DIRECTORATE FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES | DSF : SAFE AND SECURE SCOTLAND | SSS : VETERANS UNIT | 14 July 2025 | 14 August 2025 | 12 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500475982 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request - John Swinney's planned meeting with US President Donald Trump in late July | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL STRATEGY AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS | DIRECTORATE FOR CULTURE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS | DEA : INTERNATIONAL DIVISION | INTER : International Relations | 15 July 2025 | 14 August 2025 | 13 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500476124 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request: Ministerial Diaries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | MPO : Division Management Team | 15 July 2025 | 14 August 2025 | 13 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500476125 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request: Ministerial Diaries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | MPO : Division Management Team | 15 July 2025 | 15 August 2025 | 13 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500476126 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request: Ministerial Diaries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | MPO : Division Management Team | 15 July 2025 | 15 August 2025 | 13 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500476127 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request: Ministerial Diaries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | MPO : Division Management Team | 15 July 2025 | 14 August 2025 | 13 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500476128 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request: Ministerial Diaries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | MPO : Division Management Team | 15 July 2025 | 15 August 2025 | 13 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500476129 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request: Ministerial Diaries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | MPO : Division Management Team | 15 July 2025 | 15 August 2025 | 13 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |
| 202500476219 | FOI | Sandie Peggie tribunal queries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE | DIRECTORATE FOR HEALTH WORKFORCE | DHWLSR : CULTURE, PAY AND PARTNERSHIP | CPP : WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP AND PRACTICE | 16 July 2025 | | 14 August 2025 | In Process But Overdue |
| 202500476301 | FOI | FOI overseas expenses | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL STRATEGY AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS | DIRECTORATE FOR CULTURE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS | DEA : INTERNATIONAL FUTURES | INTF : Future International Policy | 17 July 2025 | 15 August 2025 | 15 August 2025 | Completed But Overdue |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 202500476489 | EIR Request | EIR Adoption and Regulation of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | TRANSPORT SCOTLAND | TS : ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY | TS : TS ECS, LOW CARBON ECONOMY INNOVATION AND SUPPLY CHAIN | 18 July 2025 | | 18 August 2025 | In Process But Overdue |
| 202500476625 | FOI | FOI dispute between Fife Health Board and Dr Beth Upton and Sandie Peggie | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE | DIRECTORATE FOR HEALTH WORKFORCE | DHWLSR : CULTURE, PAY AND PARTNERSHIP | CPP : WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP AND PRACTICE | 20 July 2025 | | 18 August 2025 | In Process But Overdue |
| 202500476628 | FOI | FOI Sandie Peggie V Fife Health Board and Beth Upton CNORIS | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE | DIRECTORATE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FINANCE | DHSCF : NHS SCOTLAND FINANCE | NHSF : NHS FINANCIAL PLANNING, REPORTING AND DATA | 19 July 2025 | | 18 August 2025 | In Process But Overdue |
| 202500476729 | FOI | Various questions regarding spending | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL EDUCATION AND JUSTICE | EDUCATION SCOTLAND | EdS : Corporate Services | EdS : Governance | 21 July 2025 | | 19 August 2025 | In Process But Overdue |
| 202500476743 | FOI | FMAR – (2) of 2: Changes made in response to Supreme Court gender ruling | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL COMMUNITIES | DIRECTORATE FOR EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS | DEIH : Equality | E : WOMEN'S EQUALITY UNIT | 22 July 2025 | | 20 August 2025 | In Process But Overdue |

Case owner names were redacted

An exemption under section 38(1)(b) of FOISA (personal information) applies to some of the information you have requested because it is personal data of a third party, for example the names of staff who are in grades below the Senior Civil Service.

| Reference | Casetype | Title | Case Owner | Director-General | Directorate | Division | Created | Issued | Due | Status | Late Reason |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 202500474814 | FOI | FOI EHRC | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL COMMUNITIES | DIRECTORATE FOR EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS | DEIH : Equality | 07/07/2025 | 06/08/2025 16:19 | 05/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | Minutes to go back to Ministers for comment, post input from EHRC. |
| 202500475615 | FOI | FOI - Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP and Neil Gray MSP met with the Equality and Human Rights Commission on or around 11 June 2025 | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL COMMUNITIES | DIRECTORATE FOR EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS | DEIH : Equality | 12/07/2025 | 13/08/2025 09:27 | 11/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | Update Required |
| 202500474614 | FOI | Freedom of Information request - LGBT staff network discussions since 16 April | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR PEOPLE | DFP : Attraction and Resourcing | 05/07/2025 | 06/08/2025 19:19 | 01/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | Draft in progress. Commissions sought and returned being processed. |
| 202500474995 | FOI | FOI Request - agency spend using procurement scotland framework | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR PEOPLE | DFP : Attraction and Resourcing | 08/07/2025 | 07/08/2025 09:13 | 06/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | Not all questions were answered so have reached out to procurement for more info. Hope to have this back in time for completion. |
| 202500475371 | FOI | FOI neil gray football correspondence | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | 10/07/2025 | 12/08/2025 16:23 | 08/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | Now issued |
| 202500476129 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request: Ministerial Diaries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | 15/07/2025 | 15/08/2025 17:47 | 13/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | On track to issue on time |
| 202500476128 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request: Ministerial Diaries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | 15/07/2025 | 15/08/2025 16:22 | 13/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | On track to issue on time |
| 202500476127 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request: Ministerial Diaries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | 15/07/2025 | 14/08/2025 18:58 | 13/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | On track to issue on time |
| 202500476126 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request: Ministerial Diaries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | 15/07/2025 | 15/08/2025 14:01 | 13/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | Issued after deadline |
| 202500476125 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request: Ministerial Diaries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | 15/07/2025 | 15/08/2025 16:07 | 13/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | On track to issue on time |
| 202500476124 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request: Ministerial Diaries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | 15/07/2025 | 14/08/2025 18:08 | 13/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | Issued after deadline |
| 202500475367 | FOI | FOI events at bute house | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL CORPORATE | DIRECTORATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MINISTERIAL SUPPORT | COMMS : Ministerial Private Offices | 10/07/2025 | | 08/08/2025 | In Process But Overdue | Issues in relation to matching cost figures compared to previously released FOI. Aim to issue next week |
| 202500474736 | EIR Request | Letter from Graham Simpson MSP | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL ECONOMY | DIRECTORATE FOR PLANNING, ARCHITECTURE AND REGENERATION | DPAR : Planning and Development Delivery | 04/07/2025 | 05/08/2025 16:19 | 01/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | 06/08 - Final response is ready but Spads raised some last minute concerns with release. We have restated our position on release and PO have askd to see a revised copy of final response. As soon as PO give final clearance this will issue |
| 202500474980 | FOI | Mingyang Smart Energy Group FOI | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL ECONOMY | DIRECTORATE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT | ITI : EXPORT AND INWARD INVESTMENT POLICY | 08/07/2025 | 18/08/2025 15:45 | 06/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | 20/08 – issued 18 August 2025 after DFM sign off.<br>14/08 – currently sitting with DFM, latest advice went last night. |
| 202500475893 | FOI | Freedom of Information request - Lossiemouth | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL EDUCATION AND JUSTICE | DIRECTORATE FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES | DSF : SAFE AND SECURE SCOTLAND | 14/07/2025 | 14/08/2025 16:48 | 12/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | |
| 202500474984 | FOI | FOI request - SQA chief exec | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL EDUCATION AND JUSTICE | DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION REFORM | DER : Education Reform | 08/07/2025 | | 06/08/2025 | In Process But Overdue | Sent to SpAds on 28 July. Received back 11 August and sent to CabSec. Awaiting final clearance before issue. |
| 202500475593 | FOI | Single-sex toilets FOI | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL EDUCATION AND JUSTICE | DIRECTORATE FOR LEARNING | DLEARN : Workforce, Infrastructure and Digital | 14/07/2025 | | 12/08/2025 | In Process But Overdue | On track - was sent to SpAds for review on 28/07 - SpAds have now confirmed that the earliest they can look at this FOI is 11/08 which is one day before the deadline. The Cabinet Secretary has confirmed that she wants SpAds comments first before she will consider. With Cab Sec for clearance 12/08 but not cleared. Chased with PO |
| 202500476628 | FOI | FOI Sandie Peggie V Fife Health Board and Beth Upton CNORIS | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE | DIRECTORATE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FINANCE | DHSCF : NHS SCOTLAND FINANCE | 19/07/2025 | | 18/08/2025 | In Process But Overdue | Similar case is being dealt with by HW which may impact on this case but aiming to complete by deadline. |
| 202500476219 | FOI | Sandie Peggie tribunal queries | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE | DIRECTORATE FOR HEALTH WORKFORCE | DHWLSR : CULTURE, PAY AND PARTNERSHIP | 16/07/2025 | | 14/08/2025 | In Process But Overdue | Case currently with SpAds. Will need Ministerial approval following SpAds. |
| 202500476625 | FOI | FOI dispute between Fife Health Board and Dr Beth Upton and Sandie Peggie | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE | DIRECTORATE FOR HEALTH WORKFORCE | DHWLSR : CULTURE, PAY AND PARTNERSHIP | 20/07/2025 | | 18/08/2025 | In Process But Overdue | No issues, will be issued on Monday 18th Aug. |
| 202500470433 | EIR Request | Meetings between SG, Alexander Dennis/NFI Group/NFI International Limited | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | TRANSPORT SCOTLAND | TS : ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY | 11/06/2025 | 13/08/2025 16:00 | 06/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | 07/08 - Now overdue My case is currently with SpAds – it was assessed as sensitive and sent to FOI SpAds on 04/08/25. SpAds Admin confirmed 6/8 that they will not be able to look at it until at least 7/8. This case will be late. FM's PO has already stated they wish to clear after SpAds. Morna Cannon is aware.<br><br>AT RISK **Sensitive marked case - on time response dependent on SpAds comments and Cab Sec clearance being obtained ahead of deadline**<br>31/07 - On track to issue on time<br>24/07 - My case is within the timeline for response and is on track to issue on time<br>15/07 - On track to issue on time<br>10/07 - My case is within the timeline for response and is on track to issue on time<br><br>30/06 - Case final due date changed to 06/08<br>25/06 - My case is within the timeline for response and is on track to issue on time |
| 202500470399 | EIR Request | FMAR - (2) of 2: Impact zonal pricing may have on wind farm building in Scotland | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | DIRECTORATE FOR ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE | DECC : Onshore Electricity, Strategy and Consents | 11/06/2025 | 08/08/2025 09:47 | 06/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | 29/7 - With Spads and Ministers for clearance, currently on track |
| 202500470423 | EIR Request | All correspondence between SG and Alexander Dennis Ltd from January 2025 | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | TRANSPORT SCOTLAND | TS : ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY | 12/06/2025 | 13/08/2025 15:28 | 07/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | 07/08 - Now overdue This case was assessed as sensitive and is due to be sent to FOI SpAds on 06/08/25. Due to the update from SpAds about the delay to the other case, and the need for ministerial clearance, this case will almost certainly be late.<br><br>AT RISK **Sensitive marked case - on time response dependent on SpAds comments and Cab Sec clearance being obtained ahead of deadline**<br>31/07 - On track to issue on time<br>24/07 - On track to issue on time<br>15/07 - My case is within the timeline for response and is on track to issue on |
| 202500475435 | EIR Request | Zonal Pricing for Electricity | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | DIRECTORATE FOR ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE | DECC : Onshore Electricity, Strategy and Consents | 10/07/2025 | | 08/08/2025 | In Process But Overdue | Update Required |

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| 202500479713 | EIR Request | Submission SG to UKG consultation re Allocation Round 7 of CfD scheme | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | DIRECTORATE FOR OFFSHORE WIND | DOW : Director of Offshore Wind | 13/07/2025 | | 11/08/2025 | In Process But Overdue | 18/08 - received 15/08. on track. |
| 202500476489 | EIR Request | EIR Adoption and Regulation of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | TRANSPORT SCOTLAND | TS : ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY | 18/07/2025 | | 18/08/2025 | In Process But Overdue | 18/08 - Likely case will issue late<br>14/08 - My case is within the timeline for response and is on track to issue on time<br>07/08 - My case is within the timeline for response and is on track to issue on time. Estimated to be ready by Wednesday 13th for clearance ahead of the 18th deadline<br>31/07 - My case is within the timeline for response and is on track to issue on time |
| SEC-25-193 | FOI | Declarations of Interest & Secondary Employment (WMT) | | DIRECTOR-GENERAL NET ZERO | FORESTRY AND LAND SCOTLAND | | 08/07/2025 | 06/08/2025 | 08/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | |
| 202500475982 | FOI | Freedom of Information Request - John Swinney's planned meeting with US President Donald Trump in late July | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL STRATEGY AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS | DIRECTORATE FOR CULTURE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS | DEA : INTERNATIONAL DIVISION | 15/07/2025 | 14/08/2025 16:57 | 13/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | On track to issue on time. |
| 202500476301 | FOI | FOI overseas expenses | [redacted] | DIRECTOR-GENERAL STRATEGY AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS | DIRECTORATE FOR CULTURE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS | DEA : INTERNATIONAL FUTURES | 17/07/2025 | 18/08/2025 00:00 | 15/08/2025 | Completed But Overdue | MiCase error - email not sent |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Case owner names were redacted** | **An exemption under section 38(1)(b) of FOISA (personal information) applies to some of the information you have requested because it is personal data of a third party, for example the names of staff who are in grades below the Senior Civil Service.** | | | | | | | | | | |