



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Our ref: ATISN 12350

Date: 22 June 2018

Dear _____,

Request for Information – ATISN reference 12350

Thank you for your request which was received by the Welsh Government on 24 May 2018. You asked for the following information:

All correspondence (text, email, letters or otherwise) sent or received in the past four weeks by Welsh Government Ministers, Officials, Civil Servants and Special Advisers regarding/relating/organising visits to North Wales by Ministers on Thursday 24th May 2018?

From my preliminary assessment I estimate that it will cost more than the appropriate limit set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 to answer your request. The appropriate limit specified for central government is £600. This represents the estimated cost of it taking over 24 hours of time to determine whether we hold the information and to thereafter locate, retrieve and extract it.

In order to accurately identify just the e-mails relating to visits to North Wales we would require a manual search of each relevant mailbox. This is because e-mails are free text, and would, therefore, not automatically have a subject containing date or location (or indeed refer to North Wales directly, as opposed to a location within North Wales.)

In private offices alone this would involve a manual search of 3 generic mailboxes, plus mailboxes of each individual staff member. Each individual e-mail would have to be read to confirm if it related to a visit, where that visit was, and if that location is then within the area of the North Wales electoral region. This would take a minimum of 30 seconds per mail and with the volume of e-mails in each Ministerial mailbox, it would take more than 2.5 days to check through. Therefore, this is over the 24 hour time limit and would cost more than the £600 appropriate limit specified for central government.

In addition, as the details of Ministerial visits in May will be published in early July, they are currently exempt under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000), information intended for future publication. Section 22 is a publicly tested exemption and I have set out my arguments for non-disclosure at Annex 1 to this letter.



If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or

Email: FreedomOfInformationOfficer@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

Annex 1

Section 22: Information intended for future publication.

The Welsh Government believes that Section 22 is applied in relation to the requested information. Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act is subject to the public interest test. This means that in order to withhold information under its provisions, any personal interest of the requester notwithstanding, it has to be shown that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs that in releasing it.

Public interest arguments in favour of disclosure

The general presumption of openness and transparency, which the Freedom of Information Act aspires to.

Public interest arguments against disclosure

The intended publication date is in the not too distant future.

The Welsh Government acknowledges the public interest in openness and transparency, and Ministerial diary information is published quarterly. The information for April and May 2018 will be published in early July 2018.

Therefore, we believe the public interest would be better served in the information being published at the appropriate time. To that end, I believe the information in relation to Ministerial engagements and events should be withheld under s22 of the Act, until it is published in due course at the following link: <http://gov.wales/about/cabinet/ministerial-code/?lang=en>