

Supplementary written submission from the Scottish Information Commissioner, 21 February 2025

SPCB Supported Bodies Landscape Review Committee

1. Further clarification on the point raised during the session on the number of (Freedom of Information) FOI requests made across the public sector and how this figure relates to appeals received by my office.
2. From 2014, my office has been collecting FOI performance statistics from over 500 bodies covered by FOI legislation - this represents just a small fraction of the bodies covered by FOI legislation but captures the significant public sector bodies in Scotland.
3. [Read the Scottish Information Commissioner's FOI Performance Data and EIR's statistics](#)
4. The data provides a valuable insight into how FOI is operating in Scotland. It is subject to detailed analysis by my office; examining trends at a national, sectoral and authority level, highlighting areas and issues for potential intervention action to support improvement, informing our work to promote and enforce FOI and providing us with, to a limited degree, the ability to forecast future enforcement workloads.
5. Data submitted for 2023-24 shows a substantial increase in requests across 2023-24, with a 13.6% increase on the previous year. The total number of reported requests of 95,361 was the highest reported volume of requests since we began collecting statistics eleven years ago (although, it should be noted, that both the number of organisations covered by FOI and the number of organisations whom we ask to supply statistical data has increased over that time).
6. 74% of all requests submitted resulted in the disclosure of some or all of the requested information, with more than half of requesters (51%) receiving everything they asked for. These figures rise further when cases where information was not held are discounted, to 84% (some or all information disclosed) and 59% (all information disclosed). These figures are a clear indication that the FOI regime is healthy, valued and generally working well.
7. The proportion of cases where an internal review (the first appeal stage before a case can be brought to me) was requested remains consistent across a number of years at 3% of total requests. Similarly, fewer than 1% of all requests (0.6%) went on to be appealed to my office – this percentage has remained consistent across all years. Evidently, my appeal numbers increase proportionally with the number of initial requests made across the public sector.