

EXTRACTS FROM BRIEFING PAPER FOR THE MINISTER FOR PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS – 21 JUNE 2017Extract 1

So in tandem with improving our FOI performance and, as part of continuing development of the Scottish Government website, I am taking steps to ensure that all information released in response to information requests is also published online from 3rd July.

Information will be available on the publications section at beta.gov.scot allowing anyone to search and access information released through FOI requests.”

Extract 2

- Intention to publish all information released in response to FOI requests online from 3 July – in line with commitment to open and transparent government.
- Information will be made available on www.beta.gov.scot allowing anyone to search and access information released through FOI requests.

Extract 3**Q&A specific to the Disclosure Log****What will be published?**

Information released in response to FOI requests, whether it is full release or partial release. Personal data will be removed.

Aren't/weren't all FOI releases published online already?

Previously some FOI releases were published on the relevant topic pages of the Scottish Government site, usually with a link on the Disclosure Log.

Publishing all information released in response to FOI requests together on one part of the gov.scot beta site will make them easier to access and search, allowing anyone to find and view the information easily.

Isn't the Scottish Government required to publish this online?

There is no statutory duty under Freedom of Information legislation to publish this information. We are publishing this information as part of our commitment to openness and transparency.

What is currently published on FOI?

We currently publish statistics on our FOI performance and summaries of the FOI requests we receive. These are available at:

www.gov.scot/About/Information/FOI/Reporting

When will the FOI responses be made available?

We aim to publish the information online on the same day.

Will the published FOI responses be backdated?

Our priority is to make sure all information released in response to FOI requests is published from 3 July onwards.

Will releases from all public bodies be included?

Information released by core Scottish Government and its agencies will be published online.

Lines in response to criticism of the Disclosure Log

- I am surprised that anyone should think this is not transparent. Publishing information released in response to FOI requests will give people greater access to our information – making it easier for anyone interested in FOI and the data we release to find it on our website. This is in line with our commitment to open and transparent government.
- It was actually one of the signatories of the journalists’ open letter who first raised concerns about FOI releases not being published on the disclosure log. This measure addresses that concern directly and effectively.
- There is no evidence that our past publication of FOI releases discouraged anyone from submitting FOI requests and I see no reason why it should do so now. That is certainly not our intention.
- In practice there proved to be significant administrative difficulties in maintaining the previous disclosure log. The development of the new Scottish Government website provides the opportunity to significantly improve our ability to make information released in response to FOI requests routinely available online. In addition, as we have always done, we will continue to proactively publish information wherever possible.
- The old Disclosure Log was only used to provide a link to information released in response to a media request. On an ad hoc basis we sometimes published information on it released under FOI where we considered that the information had a wider interest to members of the public and such publication was never consistent. This new approach simply standardises our previous approach so that everyone can access it.