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**Online Meeting of the Scottish Public Information Forum (SPIF) 23rd September 2024**

**Minute**

**1.** **Welcome and Introductions**

2. **Commissioner’s 1st Year** - David Hamilton reflected on his first year as the Scottish Information Commissioner.   It has been a busy time including promoting the FoI online portal providing statistics on designated bodies, managing the twin track appeals process and the launch of  a second Level Three intervention in the Scottish Government to “support improvements” in its “Communications and Records” [Intervention to support improvements in the Scottish Government's Communications and Records](https://www.foi.scot/scottish-government-intervention-communications-and-records)

**4. Minute and Matters Arising - meeting of 10th June 2024** [www.cfois.scot](http://www.cfois.scot)

The Minute was approved.

5. **Reports and Updates**

1. [Scottish Information Commissioner](https://www.itspublicknowledge.info/) provided an update on the work of the Office.
2. Michael Birrell [Scottish Government](https://www.gov.scot/) provided a detailed report see Appendix 1.
3. Carole Ewart [CFoIS](https://www.cfois.scot/) as CFoIS celebrates the 40th Anniversary of the organisation there will be a celebratory conference in December 2024, details on the website.

The reports were followed by a Q&A

**6. Date of next meeting** – TBC depending on date of Bill publication.

**7. Thanks were given to all who attended and participated.**

**CFoIS SCIO no SC051263** [**CFoIS website**](https://www.cfois.scot/) **info@cfois.scot @CFoIScot**

**Appendix 1 Scottish Government Update**

**Scottish Government FOI Policy Objectives 2024-26**

* The Scottish Government published its [Freedom of information policy objectives: 2024 to 2026](https://www.gov.scot/publications/freedom-of-information-policy-objectives/) on 20 June 2024.
* These reflect the Commitments made in response to the Access to Information Rights in Scotland consultation

*Social Care Consultation*

* In July the FOI Unit wrote to all stakeholders involved in the three principal stakeholder groups established to support the development of the National Care Service – and a number of other stakeholders with wider interests - to highlight the Scottish Government’s commitment to consult on extension of FOISA to private and third sector operators of care home and care at home services.
* The letter sought expressions of interest in participating in an Advisory Group to support development of the consultation. We have had a number of fruitful discussions with stakeholders about this and hope to circulate a proposed remit for the Group for comment soon.

*Section 60 Code*

* We are also engaged with the Scottish Information Commissioner’s office on the commitment to revise the section 60 Code of Practice

*Engagement with CFOIS*

* The Minister for Parliamentary Business had a productive introductory meeting with Carole Ewart and Dr David Goldberg of CFOIS in August.
* Following the meeting the Scottish Government has undertaken to engage further with CFOIS regarding the recent evaluations carried out by the Council of Europe on compliance with the Tromso Convention, and the applicability of any learning to the Scottish context.

*FOI Reform Member’s Bill*

* The FOI Unit is planning on the basis that it expects Katy Clark MSP’s proposed Member’s Bill on FOI Reform to be introduced in the coming weeks.
* The Scottish Government will consider the proposals in any Bill that may be introduced in the Parliament.

**New Level 3 Intervention and externally-led review**

* The Scottish Government remains engaged with the Scottish Information Commissioner’s Level 3 Intervention, launched earlier this year looking at communications and records within the Scottish Government.
* Former Channel Islands Data Protection Commissioner Emma Martins is also finalising her review of Scottish Government’s use of mobile messaging apps and non-corporate devices, which is expected to publish in the coming weeks.

**Scottish Government FOI Improvement**

* The Scottish Government also remains engaged with the Scottish Information Commissioner’s ongoing Level 3 Intervention looking at FOI performance and practice.
* The actions we are taking in accordance with our current FOI improvement plan are designed to meet Commissioner’s recommendations from the previous progress report in October 2023.
* A further review of progress by the Commissioner’s office is expected to begin from early next year.

**Wider updates**

* Adeola Ogunnoiki joined the FOI Unit in July as our new FOI Policy Manager.
* Head of SG Open Government Team Doreen Grove will be participating in the UNESCO Global Conference on Universal Access to Information 2024 to be held in Ghana on 1-2 October, marking International Right to Know Day.