

16 April 2026

Dear

ATISN 26865

Information requested

Thank you for your request which I received on 4 April 2026. You asked for:

a full public copy and all associated documents of the criteria set by the Welsh Government for decision makers in applications made for Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) Emergency Assistance payments.

I have decided that **the information requested** is exempt from disclosure under section(s) **s29(1)(b) and s31(1)(a)** of the **Freedom of Information Act** and is therefore withheld. The reasons for applying these exemptions are set out in full at Annex 1 to this letter.

Next steps

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: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

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

Application of exemptions/exceptions

The Freedom of information Act/Environmental Information Regulations provide a right for anyone to ask a public authority to make requested information available to the wider public. As the release of requested information is to the world, not just the requester, public authorities need to consider the effects of making the information freely available to everybody. Any personal interest the requester has for accessing the information cannot override those wider considerations.

I have decided to withhold the following information:

Discretionary Assistance Fund – Decision Maker’s Guide

This Annex sets out the reasons for the engagement of section(s) **s29(1)(b) and s31(1)(a)** of the **Freedom of Information Act** and our subsequent consideration of the Public Interest Test.

Engagement of section 29 (1)(b) The Economy of the Freedom of Information Act

The Welsh Government believes that **the Decisions Maker’s Guide** should be exempt from disclosure. The Decision Maker’s Guide is a document that is shared between Welsh Government and NEC Software Solutions, the contractor who delivers the DAF on behalf of Welsh Government. We believe that releasing the Decision Maker’s Guide would be likely to prejudice and cause harm to the financial interests of Welsh Government and protection of public funds because, should the guidance become publicly available, this would be likely to result in an increase of applications to the DAF, by individuals who may not be in financial crisis, but by seeing the Decision Maker’s guidance, would know precisely what information to include in an application in order to receive a cash award. This would therefore result in Welsh Government funds being distributed to individuals for whom the fund was not established to support and would not, before seeing the detailed criteria in the Decision Makers Guide, have been able to provide eligible applications to the DAF as they did not meet the criteria. Given that the DAF provides direct to the individual cash grants, it is attractive to fraudulent claims and protecting the Decision Maker’s Guide allows us to mitigate against this.

Engagement of section 31 (1)(a) Law Enforcement of the Freedom of Information Act

We also believe that releasing the Decision Maker’s Guide would be likely to prejudice the prevention of crime because individuals would be able to falsely submit applications that were in line with the guidance to receive cash payments. In order to protect the fund from fraudulent applications, rigorous counter fraud controls are put in place. Making this document publicly available could undermine these controls and potentially make the DAF vulnerable to an increase in fraudulent activity.

Public Interest Test

In order to satisfy the public interest test in relation to the exemption(s), it is necessary to conclude that the public interest arguments in favour of withholding the information are sufficient to *outweigh* the public interest arguments in favour of release.

Public interest arguments in favour of disclosure

Releasing the detailed Decision Maker's Guide would allow the public to see the full criteria for the Discretionary Assistance Fund. However high level criteria for the fund is already published on the DAF website [Discretionary Assistance Fund \(DAF\): Eligibility | GOV.WALES](#).

Public interest arguments in favour of withholding

The aim of the DAF is to support those with the highest financial barriers in Wales, experiencing unexpected financial crisis with no other means of support. The budget for the DAF is finite, therefore if there were to be an increase in fraudulent applications as a result of the Decision Maker's Guide being accessible to the public, leading to an overall increase in DAF expenditure, this would limit the funds available for the people for whom the fund was established to support.

The DAF has been established in Wales since 2013, and there have been no previous requests to release this information.

Balance of public interest test

We believe that in order to protect the public interest in ensuring that funds are available to support disadvantaged individuals in a time of severe financial crisis, the public interest to withhold the information outweighs the public interest to release.