ATISN 27048

Information for disclosure – Welsh Government

The total budget of the Welsh Government for the 2025-26 financial year.	The total final budget figures for 2025 – 26 is exempt under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) - Information Accessible to the applicant by other means. Further information on this exemption can be found at page 2. The final budget can be found here [Final Budget 2025 to 2026 | GOV.WALES]
The total cost of the Welsh Government's central administration during the same financial year.	The total figures for the Central Administration MEG (which supports the whole of Welsh Government) is contained within the final budget document above.
The total number of Welsh Government civil servants and the total cost of their employment during the same financial year.	The total number of Civil Servants is 6125. The total cost information is exempt under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) – information intended for future publication. The reasons for non-disclosure can be found on page 3.
The total expenditure on communications	During 2025/6 the Welsh Government spent £3,949,668 on public information campaigns related to the previous government's policies.
The total expenditure public affairs	No information held - we have no record of any money being spend on public affairs.
The total expenditure international relations / overseas offices during the same financial year.	£7,905,129

All questions relating to Senedd Cymru transferred to that organisation for a response

Section 21 - Information accessible to applicant by other means

The exemption states:

(1) Information which is reasonably accessible to the applicant otherwise than under section 1 is exempt information.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1) —

> (a) information may be reasonably accessible to the applicant even though it is accessible only on payment; and
>
> (b) information is to be taken to be reasonably accessible to the applicant if it is information which the public authority or any other person is obliged by or under any enactment to communicate (otherwise than by making the information available for inspection) to members of the public on request, whether free of charge or on payment.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (1), information which is held by a public authority and does not fall within subsection (2)(b) is not to be regarded as reasonably accessible to the applicant merely because the information is available from the public authority itself on request, unless the information is made available in accordance with the authority's publication scheme and any payment required is specified in, or determined in accordance with, the scheme.

Public interest test

Section 21 is an absolute exemption, there is no need to consider the public interest balance.

Section 22
Engagement of section 22(1) (Information intended for future publication)

Whilst I can confirm that the Welsh Government holds information of this description, it is considered exempt under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act. This states (inter alia):

1) Information is exempt information if—
(a) the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not),
(b) the information was already held with a view to such publication at the time when the request for information was made, and
(c) it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the date referred to in paragraph (a)

I can confirm that the conditions under (a) and (b) are satisfied. Welsh Government does hold the information being requested. However, for (c), the Welsh Government believes that it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until that time. Publishing the requested information now may not reflect the information that will be published on the website; it could be misleading and not present an accurate picture. For that reason, we believe it is reasonable for the publication of costs (following the auditing of Welsh Government's accounts).

Public Interest Test

Section 22 is also a public interest tested exemption. This means that in order to withhold information under it, it has to be shown that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs that in releasing it. Whilst Welsh Government acknowledges the general public interest in openness and transparency that release would engender, we believe the release of information at this stage would be confusing and may not present complete overall information that which will be published.

The Welsh Government believes currently held costs should be exempt from disclosure on the basis that more accurate and complete information will be published in due course (including carrying out quality and accuracy checks). The information is at present unverified and may present an inaccurate picture.

Public interest arguments in favour of disclosure

- The general presumption of openness that the FOIA aspires to;
- General interest from certain sections of the public, for example parents, in the performance of further education institutions.

Public interest arguments in favour of withholding

- The intended publication date is in the not too distant future;

- Information released through the Freedom of Information Act is released to the world and not just the requester. The information in question is incomplete and are still undergoing quality assurance (and will be subject to external audit). The final, published version of the information may be different, making it possible that confusion could arise when comparing the two versions and potentially leading to incorrect conclusions being drawn;
- Disclosure of this information before the publication date may compromise trust in the accuracy of official information.

Balance of public interest test

On the basis of the above, we conclude that on balance the public interest arguments are in favour of withholding the information at this time.