



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: ATISN 27177

31 July 2026

Dear ,

Information requested

ATISN 27177 – Essential Support Grants allocation via Creative Wales and the Books Council of Wales

Thank you for your request which I received on 6 July. You asked for:

The following information regarding the £350,000 allocation provided by the Welsh Government through Creative Wales to the Books Council of Wales, announced in December 2025 as part of the £2.5 million additional funding for the creative industries, and subsequently distributed by the Books Council as Essential Support Grants to book and magazine publishers:

1. A list of all recipients of the Essential Support Grants funded by this allocation, including the amount awarded to each recipient.
2. The criteria used to determine eligibility and award amounts, including any guidance agreed between the Welsh Government or Creative Wales and the Books Council of Wales.
3. Any conditions attached by the Welsh Government or Creative Wales to this allocation, including conditions governing how the funding may be used by recipients and any monitoring or reporting requirements placed on the Books Council of Wales.
4. Any reports, returns or correspondence received from the Books Council of Wales concerning the distribution of this allocation, including any breakdown of awards made.



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Our Response

I can confirm that the Welsh Government holds some of the information you have requested, however, some of the information is exempt under Section 43, commercial interests, and Section 40, personal information, of the Freedom of Information Act. Full reasoning for applying these exemptions is included at the bottom of this letter. Please see our answers below:

1. A list of all recipients of the Essential Support Grants funded by this allocation, including the amount awarded to each recipient.

Answer: The Welsh Government does not hold this information.

2. The criteria used to determine eligibility and award amounts, including any guidance agreed between the Welsh Government or Creative Wales and the Books Council of Wales.

Answer: The Welsh Government does not hold this information.

3. Any conditions attached by the Welsh Government or Creative Wales to this allocation, including conditions governing how the funding may be used by recipients and any monitoring or reporting requirements placed on the Books Council of Wales.

Answer: Please see Doc 1.

4. Any reports, returns or correspondence received from the Books Council of Wales concerning the distribution of this allocation, including any breakdown of awards made.

Answer: Please see Doc 2.

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



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or Email: Freedomofinformation@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



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Annex A

This Annex sets out the reasons for the engagement of section(s) 40 and 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act and our subsequent consideration of the Public Interest Test.

Engagement of Section 40(2) – personal data

The Welsh Government believes the personal data contained in the information being released with this request should be exempt from disclosure

Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), together with the conditions in section 40(3)(a)(i) or 40(3)(b), provides an absolute exemption if disclosure of the personal data would breach any of the data protection principles.

‘Personal data’ is defined in sections 3(2) and (3) of the Data Protection Act 2018 (‘the DPA 2018’) and means any information relating to an identified or identifiable living individual. An identifiable living individual is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of the individual.

We have concluded that, in this instance, some of the information contained within one of the documents caught by your request contains third party personal data. Specifically, this relates to Doc 2 – Correspondence from the Books Council of Wales, containing names of Welsh Government officials and officials within publishing organisations.

Under Section 40(2) of the FOIA, personal data is exempt from release if disclosure would breach one of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the UK GDPR. We consider the principle being most relevant in this instance as being the first. This states that personal data must be:

“processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject”

The lawful basis that is most relevant in relation to a request for information under the FOIA is Article 6(1)(f) of the UK GDPR. This states:

“processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller or by a third party except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child”.



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In considering the application of Article 6(1)(f) in the context of a request for information under FOIA it is necessary to consider the following three-part test:

The Legitimate interest test: Whether a legitimate interest is being pursued in the request for information;

The Necessity test: Whether disclosure of the information/confirmation or denial that it is held is necessary to meet the legitimate interest in question;

The Balancing test: Whether the above interests override the interests, fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject.

Our consideration of these tests is set out below:

1. Legitimate Interest Test

The Welsh Government recognises there is a legitimate interest in being able to identify the officials involved in any communication in order to follow the flow of that communication and to understand the views and positions expressed by each person. We do not believe, however, there is any legitimate reason why the personal data would need to be released in order to follow and understand those communications. The views expressed in the emails are those of the Welsh Government and of external organisations. As such it is irrelevant as to who made those comments. The Welsh Government cannot identify any other legitimate interest in you or the public receiving the personal data captured by your request.

2. Is disclosure necessary?

The Welsh Government is of the view that it is not necessary to disclose the personal information caught by your request. It is straight forward, even when withholding the personal data, to follow the emails and to identify the views expressed by each individual. As such we do not believe it is necessary to disclose the personal data to allow the conversations to be followed.

3. The Balancing Test

As it has been concluded that there is no necessity to disclose the personal data of another individual, the fundamental rights and freedoms of the affected third party prevail in this instance and releasing the information cannot be justified under Article 6(1)(f).



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Conclusion

To conclude, as release of the information would not be legitimate under Article 6(1)(f), and as no other condition of Article 6 is deemed to apply, release of the information would not be lawful within the meaning of the first data protection principle. It has therefore been withheld under section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and not subject to the public interest test.

Engagement of Section 43(2) – Commercial interests

The information caught by this exemption relates to the commercial information held within emails.

Decisions relating to non-disclosure of this information have been taken with due consideration of the exemptions identified under Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). This exemption states that:

- (2) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

Section 43 is a qualified (public interest tested) exemption. This means that in order to engage it, I must show that the public interest in withholding the information is greater than the public interest in releasing it. I have therefore given consideration to the effects of disclosure of the information to the world at large as the information is made available to anybody and everybody, not just the requestor.

Public Interest Against Release

To disclose the commercial information held within the emails would enable the world to identify commercially sensitive details regarding the companies named. These companies do not expect us to disclose their commercial information, as they rely on this in order to undertake their business activities in a competitive market. This information is commercially sensitive to these companies and, as such, there is a risk of its disclosure causing the companies commercial disadvantage.

I believe the public interest is satisfied by the amount of information being disclosed in response to this request for information.

I am aware that as a general rule, the sensitivity of information is likely to reduce over time, so that the age of information, or timing of the request may be relevant in determining whether to apply the exemption, or where the public interest may lie. In this case, however, the information captured remains sensitive.



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In conclusion, I believe that the balance of the public interest therefore falls in favour of withholding the commercial information relating to the emails.



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