

Dear

Complaint in respect of ATISN 27139

You requested an internal review of the Welsh Government's response to your Freedom of Information Request. I have considered your complaint in accordance with the procedure outlined in the [Welsh Government's Practical Guide for Making Requests for Information](#) which is available by post on request or via the internet.

In your original request dated 25 June 2026 you requested the following:

1. *I would like to request the total wage bill/cost of the current Welsh Government Cabinet's staff – including the salaries, travel expenses and operational costs of all Special Advisors and private office civil servants. Please include the estimated yearly cost.*
2. *I would also like to request the total wage bill/cost of the previous Welsh Government Cabinet's staff – including the salaries, travel expenses and operational costs of all Special Advisors and private office civil servants. Please include the cost per year for the previous five years (the yearly cost over the previous administration's term in office).*

In the Welsh Government's response dated 30 July, you were told that

In relation to question 1, we do not hold a record of the estimated yearly cost of the current Welsh Government Cabinet's staff – including the salaries, travel expenses and operational costs of all Special Advisors and private office civil servants.

In relation to question 2, total costs for the years 2021/22 to 2025/26 were provided.

On 7 August, you responded to ask for an internal review of this request and commented:

It is unclear to me how a public body would not be aware of its staffing and operational costs/budget for the year. In particular, it's staff salaries. I also note that I requested the 'estimate' cost, given I understand exact travel and operational costs will be unknown but hopefully estimated in order for it to be budgeted for.

Review

I have therefore reviewed the original response to your request in terms of the information given in answer to your question 1. The Welsh Government publishes its planned expenditure through the Welsh Budget and this gives details of each Budget Expenditure Line (current documents are at <https://www.gov.wales/final-budget-2026-2027>). However, this does not give the level of detail you requested.

Following the Senedd election on 7 May, there have been major organisational changes to the teams which directly support the First Minister and the Cabinet. This means that the initial budget for 2026-2027 no longer reflects the shape and functions of the relevant divisions. That budget is still to be finalised. As a result, I have decided that the budget should not be released at this time as it would require officials to create information that does not currently exist

However, I have considered whether there is any issue that might mean that the relevant details should not be released once they have been finalised. I do not believe there is a valid reason to withhold the overall figures for the budget for the First Minister's Office (to include the budgets for all Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers) for the current year 2026-2027, when they have been agreed. This would require a further Freedom of Information request in due course

Given the change of administration, which involves a large number of people leaving and starting employment, I do not believe that releasing the estimated cost of Ministers' offices would provide a meaningful indication of overall costs and so I am not recommending this data be released.

Outcome of Review

I have therefore partially upheld your request in respect of Question 1, although this information would be accessed through another request under the Freedom of Information Act. I have not considered any issues regarding question 2 as you have not asked specifically for further information. Additional information on spend on Special Advisers in previous years is available in the Welsh Government's Annual Accounts.

Next steps

If you remain dissatisfied with this response you 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

Yours sincerely

HR Planning and Delivery