



Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref ATISN 10587

15 August, 2016

Dear

Request for Information – ATISN 10587

Thank you for your request for information which I received on 20 July 2016. In your request you asked for information relating to the number of traffic accidents that have occurred each year over the last 5 years between junctions 46 and 47 of the M4.

I can confirm we hold information relating to your request. However, some of this information is exempt from disclosure under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, information otherwise available. The data held for recorded accidents on M4 up until 2014 is available on our website - <http://gov.wales/topics/transport/road-users/road-safety-framework/road-safety-map?lang=en> please set the date range you require via the filter at the top of the map and wait for the page to update and display the data you've requested. Data for 2015 is exempt from disclosure under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act, information intended for future publication. Full reasoning for applying this exemption is attached at Annex A.

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
FreedomOfInformationOfficer@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

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,



E&I FOI Team
Welsh Government
Treforest - QED Centre
Main Avenue
Treforest Industrial Estate
Pontypridd
CF37 5YR

EconomyandInfrastructure
FOI@wales.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

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

Section 22 – Information Intended for Future Publication

Section 22 states that *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 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 am of the opinion that subsections (a) and (b) above are met because the information is held with a view to its publication. This information is expected to be published late 2016. With regards to part (c), I have given consideration as to whether it would be 'reasonable in all the circumstances' that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the proposed publication date. I am of the opinion that releasing the information at this time would cause disruption to the Welsh Government's intentions in relation to its publication arrangements. Thus I am content that the exemption is engaged.

Section 22 is a public interest exemption. This means that, in order to withhold information, I must show that the public interest in withholding is greater than the public interest in releasing it.

In terms of the public interest, it is recognised that there is public interest in there being openness and transparency within Government.

Information relating to traffic accidents that have occurred in 2015 between junctions 46 and 47 of the M4 is currently being developed. The proposed publication date for this information has been agreed as part of the normal business and will be published on the Welsh Government website by October 2016.

The Welsh Government has committed to publishing information of this nature on our website however there is a thorough validation process which is undertaken on the information to ensure its accuracy. By restricting access to the reports ahead of publication, we will be publishing the information in a co-ordinated manner to all people at the same time, and will ensure an editorial process is adhered to which will confirm the quality and integrity of data. Ultimately, this will improve the quality of information published and follow the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

To provide you with the reports ahead of their release would require Welsh Government staff to spend time on accelerating publication causing disruption to the Welsh Government's pre-set programme in relation to this work. The current arrangement of future publication allows for the planning and management of their release in such a way that disclosure does not disrupt work.

Also, an accelerated release of reports which involve research, drafting preparation and meticulous inspection might result in inaccurate, unchecked information being disclosed prematurely, misleading the public.

To that end, I do not think it is reasonable in all the circumstances or in the public interest to release the information. I believe that the balance of the public interest therefore falls in favour of withholding the information.