

17 January 2024

Dear

ATISN 20023

Thank you for your request which I received on 19 December 2023. I have provided my response to the questions you submitted at Annex 1 of this letter.

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 e-mail: 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

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.org.uk

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

Q1. How many Consultations were sent out in 2023?

Between 01/01/2023 to 31/12/2023 a total of 82 consultations were published on [Consultations | GOV.WALES](#)

This is how we make consultations available, rather than sending them out. People can register to be notified when consultations are published. And different arrangements will exist to alert known stakeholders to the publication of individual consultations.

Remaining questions

For your remaining questions I have reached the conclusion that either we do not hold the information that you have requested (questions 5 and 6) or it will cost more than the appropriate limit established in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 to consider your request. The appropriate limit specified for central government is £600. When calculating whether or not your request exceeds appropriate limit, I am allowed to consider the time it is likely to take to establish if we hold the information, locate the information, retrieve the information and extract it. If these tasks are estimated to take more than 24 hours of working time, the limit will have been exceeded.

I have provided an overview of the exercises that would be required against each question to provide the information but in some instances, indicated where information is already available which may give you the insights sought.

In light of the position outlined, if you are able to provide further clarification on the exact information sought (e.g. limiting to only 1 or 2 consultations or a particular policy area), this may bring questions within the limit. Please note any reformulated questions will be treated as a new request for information.

Q2. How many replies were received from recipients, analysed by category of recipient – personal, interest group, statutory body (eg local authority)?

Following each consultation, time is taken to analyse responses. A summary report is then prepared which will normally give information on the number and nature of the respondents, as well as summarising the views of the respondents. This is provided for each individual consultation. We do not hold central information on the number and nature of respondents to all our consultations and collating such information would be time consuming.

By looking at individual summary reports for closed consultations on the WG website, it would be possible for you to form a view of the types of respondents and their relative numbers; this may vary considerably depending on the nature of the consultation in question.

Q3. List the 'top five' consultations in terms of the number of responses received.

By looking at individual summary reports for closed consultations on the WG website, it would be possible for you to form a view of the range of numbers of responses received, which can vary considerably by topic, and which received the largest number of responses. It should also be noted that some responses come from a single individual, whilst others come from and on behalf of large groups of people (for example in an organisation or representative body).

Q4. List the 'bottom five' consultations in terms of the number of responses received

By looking at individual summary reports for closed consultations on the WG website, it would be possible for you to form a view of the range of numbers of responses received, which can vary

considerably by topic, and which received the smallest number of responses. It should also be noted that some response come from a single individual, whilst others come from and on behalf of large groups of people (for example in an organisation or representative body).

Q5. What is the annual cost of running the consultation system?

We do not hold the information.

The Welsh Government uses a variety of different tools and methods to involve, engage and consult with citizens and organisations about what the Welsh Government is proposing to do. Consultation is one of the more formal methods used.

It is sometimes a legal requirement to carry out public consultations and, whenever carried out, such consultations are always used to provide opportunities for stakeholders and citizens to express opinions and share knowledge on proposed actions. Consultation is one part of the policy development process. Whilst we do not hold any information on the costs of policy development, or public consultation within that, it would be fair to say that the scope and nature (and cost) of any public consultation will vary greatly depending on the subject matter.

6. How many staff are employed to administer the consultation system, from creation to analysis?

Please see response to question 5.

We don't have any staff who are employed to "administer the consultation system, from creation to analysis". Consultations are carried out as part of the work on developing a new policy or programme.

7. How many proposals were withdrawn as a result of the consultation?

Each published consultation summary will detail the next steps. That could include withdrawal or modification of proposals based on responses. Many consultations actually contain multiple proposals (or elements of one big proposal) and some of them may be taken forward as planned whilst others are not taken forward or changed. It would be necessary to look at the details of each consultation and then take a view on how many 'proposals' had been withdrawn (and whether a significant change counts as 'withdrawn'). As this is all available on the website you could look at individual consultations to see the outcomes.

8. How many proposals were substantially changed as a result of the consultation? (I recognise that this will be an estimate due to 'substantially' being undefined.)

As per the answer to question 7, many consultations actually contain multiple proposals and some of them may be taken forward as planned, whilst others are not taken forward or changed. It would be necessary to look at the details of each consultation, and count reported 'changes' and furthermore to make a subjective judgement as to whether proposals that were changed were 'substantially changed'.

Consultation information is however available on the Welsh Government website which you could review to see the outcomes (and determine whether that provides you with the insight sought).