

Strathclyde Research Survey

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This short survey is being carried out as part of an ESRC-funded research project at Strathclyde University. Our purpose is to better understand the information environment in which voluntary and campaign organisations currently operate.

In order to do this more effectively we are trying to get a better picture of what is currently happening throughout the UK. The results will be used as part of the wider research project and will help improve the sector's access to information. The survey should take approx 5 minutes.

The information you provide in this survey will remain anonymous unless specific permission is given.

* Have you ever contacted a public authority to request information?

Yes

No

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* Have you ever written (email, letter, or fax) to a public authority to request information?

Yes

No

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Why did you want the information? (please tick as many as apply)

- To assist with campaign work.
- To collect information to support services your organisation provides on behalf of an authority.
- To gain information regarding policy decisions taken within an authority.
- To obtain information on behalf of specific client groups.
- Other (please specify)

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* How often do you write to public authorities to request information?

- More than once a month
- About once a month
- About once every three months
- About once a year
- Hardly ever

* Have any of your requests ever been refused? (either in full or in part)?

- No
- Once
- Twice
- Three times or more

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* If a request was refused (in full or in part), were you advised by the public authority that you had a right to have the decision reviewed?

- Yes
- Most of the time
- Occasionally
- No

* Have you ever gone on to request a review by a public authority?

- No
- Once
- Twice
- Three times or more

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Why did you not decide to request a review of a public authority's decision?
(please tick as many as apply)

- I was not made aware of this option.
- I was satisfied with the public authority's response.
- I did not feel that a review would yield the information I had requested.
- I have insufficient resources (such as time, staff or finances) to follow up unsuccessful requests.
- I was concerned that pursuing a review may harm funding relations between my organisation and the public authority.
- I was concerned that pursuing a review may harm working relations between my organisation and the public authority.
- Other (please specify)

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Thinking about the times when you have not requested a review, why did you decide against it? (please tick as many as apply)

- Not applicable - I have always requested a review when a request for information has been refused.
- I was satisfied with the public authority's response.
- I did not feel that a review would yield the information I had requested.
- I often have insufficient resources (such as time, staff or finances) to follow up unsuccessful requests.
- I was concerned that pursuing a review may harm funding relations between my organisation and the public authority.
- I was concerned that pursuing a review may harm working relations between my organisation and the public authority.
- Other (please specify)

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* Were you satisfied with the outcome of the authority's review of your request(s)?

Yes

Most of the time

Occasionally

No

* After asking for a review(s), did you subsequently receive the information you were seeking?

Yes

Most of the time

Occasionally

No

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* When you were notified about the outcome of a review(s), were you also advised by the public authority of your right to appeal to the (Scottish) Information Commissioner?

Yes

Most of the time

Occasionally

No

* Have you ever gone on to appeal to the (Scottish) Information Commissioner as a result of a public authority not providing information?

No

Once

Twice

Three times or more

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* Were you satisfied with the outcome of your appeal(s) to the (Scottish) Information Commissioner?

Yes

Most of the time

Occasionally

No

* After lodging an appeal(s) with the (Scottish) Information Commissioner, did you subsequently receive the information you were seeking?

Yes

Most of the time

Occasionally

No

If you have any comment or criticism to make of the appeal process, please do so here.

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Why did you decide not to appeal to the (Scottish) Information Commissioner? (please tick as many as apply)

I was not made aware of this option.

I was satisfied with the public authority's response to the review.

I did not feel that an appeal would yield the information I had requested.

I was concerned that the process would take too long resulting in the information no longer being of use.

I have insufficient resources (such as time, staff or finances) to follow up unsuccessful requests.

I was concerned that pursuing an appeal may harm funding relations between my organisation and the public authority.

I was concerned that pursuing an appeal may harm working relations between my organisation and the public authority.

Other (please specify)

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Thinking about the times you have not appealed, why did you decide against it? (please tick as many as apply)

- Not applicable - I have always appealed when a request for information has been refused.
- I was satisfied with the public authority's response to the review.
- I did not feel that a review would yield the information I had requested.
- I was concerned that the process would take too long resulting in the information no longer being of use.
- I often have insufficient resources (such as time, staff or finances) to follow up unsuccessful requests.
- I was concerned that pursuing an appeal may harm funding relations between my organisation and the public authority.
- I was concerned that pursuing an appeal may harm working relations between my organisation and the public authority.
- Other (please specify)

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* Have you ever mentioned the FOI Act in a request you have made to a public authority?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

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* Why did you choose to mention the FOI Act in your request?

- I thought the public authority would take the request more seriously.
- I hoped it would cause the public authority to respond more quickly.
- I always state this as a matter of course.
- Other (please specify)

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* Why have you never chosen to mention the FOI Act in a request?

- I did not realise that my requests for information have FOI rights attached to them.
- I did not want my request to come across as challenging or aggressive towards the public authority.
- Other (please specify)

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* Are you aware that if you make a written request for information to a public authority, under freedom of information law it must respond to you?

Yes

No

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The Freedom of Information Act and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act both came into effect on the 1st January 2005.

The UK's freedom of information laws give everyone a right to access the information held by public bodies. The range of public bodies covered by FOI is very wide, and includes central government, local authorities, educational institutions, the NHS, and the Police. Under FOI, public bodies must respond to all written requests for information, and information can only be withheld in certain, limited, circumstances (e.g. where it is personal data).

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Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Please note that it is your general impression that we are interested in - you don't need direct experience of FOI in order to answer.)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The Freedom of Information Act is a useful resource for my organisation.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Public authorities treat all FOI requests equally regardless of who is asking for information.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
If I made an FOI request I am confident I would receive the information I asked for.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
Making an FOI request could harm relations between my organisation and a public authority.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
FOI has made it easier for my organisation to access public sector information.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
I am confident that I have all the information I require to use FOI effectively.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
I am confident that I would receive information I had requested without an adverse time delay.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn
I am likely to use FOI in the future.	jn	jn	jn	jn	jn

* Have you ever asked someone else to make a request for information on behalf of your organisation?

jn Yes

jn No

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Why did you choose to make a request for information through someone else? (please tick as many as apply)

- To make use of the individual/third party's expertise.
- To ensure that my organisation was not directly associated with the request.
- My organisation does not have the resources to pursue requests for information.
- Because an individual or third party offered to make a specific request on my organisation's behalf.
- Other (please specify)

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Are there any factors which you believe would discourage you from making requests for information to public authorities? (please tick as many as apply)

- I do not know enough about the Freedom of Information Act and the rights under this legislation.
- I do not have sufficient time to make a request and follow the request through.
- I have concerns over the financial costs involved in the process.
- I do not know how to make a request.
- I am unsure which body to make the request to.
- I am concerned that certain requests may harm working relations between my organisation and the public authority.
- I am concerned that FOI use may harm funding relations between my organisation and the public authority.
- My organisation uses other ways to access the information it requires from public authorities.
- Other (please specify)

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* Please specify the sector that your organisation works within.

Voluntary/Campaign/Non-profit/Charity

Public authority

Central government

Media

Further/Higher Education

Other public body

Other (please specify)

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* Which of the following would you describe as the main field of work of your organisation? (please tick one)

Education/Training/Employment

Medical/Health/Sickness

Disability

Social Care

Relief of poverty (within the UK)

Overseas Aid/Famine Relief

Civil Liberties/Human Rights/Foreign Policy

Accommodation/Housing

Religious Activities

Arts/Culture

Sport/Recreation

Animals

Environment/Conservation/Heritage

Economic/Community Development

Services for Women

Services for Ethnic Minorities

Services for the Elderly

Umbrella organisation

Other (please specify)

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* Please estimate the annual income of your organisation.

None

Under £25,000

£25,001-£50,000

£50,001-£100,000

£100,001-£500,000

£500,001-£1million

Over £1million

Over £5million

* Does your organisation receive any funding from public authorities?

Yes, all of our funding.

Yes, a good proportion.

Yes, a small amount.

No, none at all.

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* Which of the following functions describes your own role within your organisation? (please tick as many as apply)

- Marketing
- Fundraising
- Information/Media
- Policy
- Research
- Campaigning
- Administrative
- Finance
- Business Development
- Human Resources
- Project Manager
- Director of Operations
- Other (please specify)

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* Please specify in which country you are based.

- Scotland
- England
- Wales
- Northern Ireland

Please specify in which region you are based.

	Scotland	England	Wales	Northern Ireland
Region	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

If happy to do so, please enter your contact details.

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* Would you be willing to participate in a short follow-up interview as part of this research?

Yes

No