

Report to:	QSMTM
Report by:	Claire Stephen, Head of Policy and Information (HOPI)
Meeting Date:	9 November 2023
Subject/ Title: (and VC no)	Website Statistics Report Q1-Q2 2023-24 (VC 197308)
Attached Papers (title and VC no)	Website Statistics Report Q1 and Q2 2023-24 (VC 197308)

Purpose of report

1. To report on performance of the Scottish Information Commissioner’s website in Q1 and Q2 in 2023-24.

Recommendation and actions

2. I recommend that:
3. The Senior Management Team (SMT) notes the contents of this report and the attached paper
 - (i) This committee report and attached paper are published in full as set out in the publication section below.

Executive summary

4. The attached document reports on activity on the Commissioner’s website during Q1 and Q2 of 2023-24 and provides a summary, for comparison purposes, of the performance of the website over 2022-23 into 2023-24.
5. Performance figures remain healthy and as expected.
6. User, Session and Page views have all increased, with bounce rate also increasing. Bounce rate can indicate that the user has found all of the information they require on a single page, it also indicates the engagement rate of our website. A low bounce rate is a measure of good performance for a commercial site, but for the purposes of our website, our bounce rate is satisfactory.
7. The most viewed pages of the website during Q1 and Q2 of 2023-24 included the Homepage, ‘Briefings and Guidance’ pages, and the decisions database. The most accessed pages throughout 2023-24 to date, remain consistent with our Homepage, ‘Briefings and Guidance’, ‘Appeal’ and the decisions database consistently appearing in the top 5.
8. Notable that we continue to experience zero downtime with our website over the last year and the first two quarters of 2023-24.

Risk impact

9. The website is the Commissioner’s principal communication tool. The risks associated with lack of effective communications are identified within existing risk management mechanisms, and are mitigated by actions set out in our communications planning and strategy tools.

Equalities impact

10. Across 2020-21 work took place to identify and address issues regarding accessibility of the Commissioner's website for as many people as possible, in line with requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. The findings from this work fed into the development and build of the new website.
11. Accessibility is an evolving and developing issue and we continue to work on improving the accessibility of the content of our website as far as practicable.
12. It is noted that not all people in Scotland can or wish to use the internet, and as a result the Commissioner provides information in alternative formats including via the enquiries service, wherever possible.

Privacy impact

13. No new privacy implications arise from this report.

Resources impact

14. The website is currently maintained within planned operational resources, and the content of this report does not in itself give rise to any additional resource impact.

Operational/ strategic plan impact

15. The performance of the Commissioner's website is critical to delivery of several strategic and operational priorities. This report's findings do not highlight any new impacts.

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

16. None identified.

Consultation and Communication

17. Relevant policy and information officers have been involved in preparation of the report. This report provides detail to the SMT about performance of the Commissioner's website.

Publication

18. I recommend that this committee report and the attached paper are published in full

Website Statistics Report Q1 and Q2 2023-24

Background and introduction

1. This report provides data from the Scottish Information Commissioner's website (www.itspublicknowledge.info), although the report focusses on for the period from 1 April to 30 September 2023 (Q 2023-24), it also reflects on the annual overall performance of the website.
2. We've experienced no service disruption with regard to the availability of our website and minimal technical issues.

Key website metrics: summary

Website performance stats	Q1*	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1 2023-24	Q2	2023-24 Total
Users	10,769	8,613	8,280	9,915	10,233	11,462	21,695
New Users	8,446	6,241	6,133	7,555	7,915	9,150	17,065
Sessions	18,130	15,230	14,958	17,424	17,747	19,717	37,464
Return visitors (%)	51.2	64	66	68	31.2	28.9	
Pageviews	61,265	44,239	45,708	49,879	48,793	53,519	102,312
Unique page views	42,774	35,142	36,747	39,852	40,044	44,097	84,141
Bounce rate (%)	40.49	46.82	49.35	52.34	53.42	54.46	
Acquisition Search engine (%)	53	46	56	59	63	60	
Direct (%)	32	37	35	30	27	26	
Referral (%)	13	15	8	9	9	10	
Social (%)	2	2	1	2	1	5	

*New website launched on 7 April 2022.

3. New user numbers continue to rise steadily from Q2 2022-23. A new user is someone who has visited our website for the first time. However, it's important to note that this is based on browser cookies, people who have cleared their cookies or accessed the website using a different device will be counted as a new user.
4. Sessions also show a trend upwards over the year, with a significant increase in Q2 of 2023-24. A session is a single visit to our website, consisting of one or more pageviews. However, a session timeout is 30 minutes – if the user is on longer than 30 mins, it will be counted as two sessions.
5. Unique page views extracts pages that are viewed multiple times in a single session. Again, this is showing a steady increase from Q2 2022-23 onwards, again with a significant increase in Q2 2023-24.

6. Bounce rate has increased to 54.46% over the year. Bounce rate is the percentage of sessions with a single page view. If our aim is to direct people to other pages on our website, then we should aim to lower the bounce rate. However, its important to apply context when looking at bounce rate as we may wish some pages to deliver all of the information that somebody is looking for – e.g. where our newsletter directs readers to a single page for further information on a specific subject. We've previously referred to industry standards of 55% or lower representing adequate performance, this standard is clearly more relevant in the context of commercial sites. Further consideration of the purpose of our website content is required with setting bounce rate goals.
7. Acquisition figures tell us how people are finding our website. Our figures indicate that, increasingly people are using search engines to locate our site. 60% of activity on our website was as a result of search engine search.
8. Direct refers to typing the URL directly (may be saved as a favourite) or clicking on a link in an email application. Direct sessions also includes other cases where Google Analytics is unable to identify the source of the click. Direct referral is steadily declining from Q2 2022-23.
9. Referral is where a user is directed to our website from a third-party website. There has been a dip in the % of users coming to us through referral towards the end of last year, but this appears to be rising again. The most common referrals can be attributed to the Scottish Government's intranet site, followed by WhatDoTheyKnow.com.
10. Users accessing our site via social media remains low but steady. However, Q2 2023-24 saw a slight upturn in the number of social media referrals due to increased social media engagement (related to the CFI conference and discussion on social media of decision 004/2023, which was recently appealed). As an organisation we are limited to the use of Twitter, if we were to launch a LinkedIn channel this year, it is likely that acquisitions from this medium will increase.

Most accessed content

11. Top 10 pages in Q1/2:

No.	Q1 Page	Q2 Page
1	Home	Home
2	/foisa-exemptions	/briefings and guidance
3	/briefings and guidance	/foisa-exemptions
4	/decisions	/decisions
5	/foi law	/foi-law
6	/eir-exceptions	/eir – exceptions/current vacancies
7	/appeal	/your rights/how-do-l-ask
8	/your rights	/contact us/decision-0042023
9	/response calculator	/your rights/ response calculator
10	/contact us	/appeal/statistics