



Scottish Information
Commissioner
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Decision Notice 062/2024

Recruitment process: interview questions, scoring mechanism and success rates

Authority: Public Health Scotland
Case Ref: 202200542

Summary

The Applicant asked the Authority for information about the recruitment process that took place in November 2021 for an Information Analyst post. The Authority provided some information and withheld the remainder on the basis that disclosure would substantially prejudice the conduct of its public affairs. The Applicant disagreed with this, and believed the Authority held further information not previously disclosed. During the investigation, the Authority fully disclosed the information it had previously withheld. The Commissioner investigated and found that the Authority had been entitled to withhold information at review stage. He was further satisfied that the Authority had disclosed all other information falling within the scope of the parts of the request under consideration in this case.

Relevant statutory provisions

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) sections 1(1), (2) and (6) (General entitlement); 2(1)(b) (Effect of exemptions); 30(c) (Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs); 47(1) and (2) (Application for decision by Commissioner)

The full text of each of the statutory provisions cited above is reproduced in Appendix 1 to this decision. The Appendix forms part of this decision.

Background

1. On 18 February 2022, the Applicant made a five-part request (with various sub-parts) to the Authority, seeking information about a recruitment process which was carried out in November 2021 for the post of Information Analyst. This Decision Notice covers parts 3a, 4a, 5b and 5c of the Applicant's request, in which she asked for the following information:

3 *I understand that the final stage (and the only one that counted towards a final decision) was an interview which included both technical and competency based questions:*

a. *What were the questions?*

4 *I am assuming that there was a scoring mechanism agreed and communicated to all interviewers to ensure fairness and consistency:*

a. *What was the scoring mechanism for each question?*

5 *I understand that some B5 Information Analysts in [the Authority] have received specific training as part of the Analysts Training Institute [ATI] initiative:*

• ...

b. *What is the success rate of the Analysts Training Institute B5 analysts who applied to a B6 post?*

c. *What was the equivalent rate for the rest of the applicants?*

I believe that it is appropriate for me to request this information, based on the following points from the NHS Scotland Agenda for Change Handbook:

31.20 Selection should be consistently applied and based upon clear criteria which are in line with the job description and person specification.

31.21 A written record of all decisions should be kept for a minimum of six months.

31.22 A means of monitoring the selection process should be agreed at local level.

31.23 Interviews are one means of selecting job applicants. Consideration should be given to the options available. In all cases the process should suit the requirements of the job and be designed to bring out the best in the applicants.

A full copy of the Applicant's request is set out in Appendix 2 to this decision. The Appendix forms part of this decision.

2. The Authority responded on 8 March 2022, and also offered a follow-up discussion with a staff member if further clarification was required:

- For part 3a, it explained the questions asked at interview were a combination of technical and competency based questions, and provided a summary of each one.
- For part 4a, it explained that the scoring mechanism used was based on the recommended Scoring Criteria of 1-5 provided by National Services Scotland (NSS) HR Recruitment Service, which had been agreed and communicated to all interviewers. Model answers for each question had been created internally and these were used to support the marking process.

- For parts 5b and 5c, it stated that, of the 15 successful candidates, three internal Information Analysts who had been inducted on the ATI were successful (part 5b), and six internal Information Analysts who had not been inducted on the ATI were successful (part 5c).
3. On 12 March 2022, the Applicant wrote to the Authority requesting a review of its decision. The Applicant stated that she was dissatisfied with the decision because:
- For part 3a, while the Authority had provided “themes”, it had not provided the actual interview questions. She asked the Authority to provide the actual questions asked.
 - For part 4a, the Authority’s response indicated that there were written copies of the relevant documents, but details had not been provided. She asked the Authority to provide details of both the scoring criteria and the model answers.
 - For parts 5b and 5c, she had asked for the rates of successful candidates who had received the ATI training and those who had not. A rate was made up of a nominator and a denominator, but the Authority had only provided nominators. She asked for a full response including the denominator, i.e. the total number of candidates – successful plus unsuccessful – who had / had not been inducted on the ATI.
4. The Authority notified the Applicant of the outcome of its review on 1 April 2022, upholding its original decision with modifications:
- For part 3a, the Authority withheld the actual interview questions under the exemption in section 30(c) (Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs) of FOISA. It explained that disclosure would disrupt its recruitment process, would require the questions and model answers to be reviewed (placing an unnecessary burden on, and diversion to, current resources), and would give advantage to those candidates who were aware of its disclosure log. On balance, the Authority considered the public interest favoured maintaining the exemption.
 - For part 4a, the Authority withheld the scoring criteria and model answers under section 30(c) of FOISA. It explained that disclosure would impact its ability to offer a fair and effective recruitment and selection process, and would give advantage to those candidates who were aware of its disclosure log. The Authority considered the balance of public interest lay in maintaining the exemption.
 - For part 5b, the Authority provided the total number of candidates, and the numbers of these who were shortlisted, interviewed and successful (the latter broken down by internal / external candidates). It explained that three of the 15 successful candidates had been inducted on the ATI (20%).
 - For part 5c, the Authority provided the success rates of the total number of non-ATI candidates (12 out of 15, or 80%), successful internal non-ATI candidates (six out of 15, or 40%) and successful external candidates (six out of 15, or 40%).
5. On 4 April 2022, the Applicant wrote to the Authority, stating she was looking for the comparative success rates of different types of B6 Senior Analyst candidates, which could not be calculated from the figures provided. She asked the Authority to provide figures for each type of candidate (internal non-ATI, internal ATI and external) who had applied, been shortlisted and had been interviewed (in table format).

6. The Authority responded on 7 April 2022 and provided the additional figures requested. It informed the Applicant that her request had now been closed and any additional requests for information would be processed as new FOI requests.
7. On 20 April 2022, the Applicant wrote to the Authority, requesting a review of its decision to withhold the information requested in parts 3a and 4a under section 30(c) of FOISA, with reasoning. For parts 5b and 5c, she commented that, after three attempts, she had finally received figures that allowed her to calculate comparable success rates.
8. The Authority responded on 3 May 2022. It informed the Applicant that, following its review outcome [of 1 April 2022], and the additional information provided on 7 April 2022, her request had been closed. The Authority explained that the Applicant now had the right to make a formal complaint to the Commissioner.
9. On 3 May 2022, the Applicant wrote to the Authority, arguing that her email of 4 April 2022 was not a request for review, but sought clarification that the Authority had failed to provide the figures requested. She clarified that her email of 20 April 2023 was a request for review, as she did not consider her request to be closed. She asked the Authority to re-open her request and carry out a review, otherwise she would refer to the appeals process.
10. On 10 May 2022, the Applicant wrote to the Commissioner, applying for a decision in terms of section 47(1) of FOISA. The Applicant stated that she was dissatisfied with the outcome of the Authority's review because:
 - For parts 3a and 4a, she did not agree with the Authority's reasons for withholding the information under section 30(c) of FOISA.
 - For parts 5b and 5c, she believed the Authority had not been transparent in its replies (by providing a range of numbers in its official response that would not allow calculation of comparative rates), and may have tried to hide the real comparative success rate of two groups of candidates.

Investigation

11. The Commissioner determined that the application complied with section 47(2) of FOISA and that he had the power to carry out an investigation.
12. On 15 June 2022, the Authority was notified in writing that the Applicant had made a valid application. The Authority was asked to send the Commissioner the information withheld from the Applicant. The Authority provided the information.
13. Section 49(3)(a) of FOISA requires the Commissioner to give public authorities an opportunity to provide comments on an application. On 20 July 2023, in line with section 49(3), the Authority was invited to provide its comments.
14. On 2 August 2023, the Authority informed the Commissioner that it was now willing to disclose the information requested in parts 3a and 4a in an attempt to resolve the case informally. The Authority fully disclosed this information to the Applicant on 8 August 2023.
15. The Applicant informed the Commissioner, on 9 August 2023, that she did not believe that the information now provided satisfied her request, and wished to continue with her appeal for the reasons previously stated. The case was subsequently allocated to an investigating officer.

16. The Authority was again invited to comment on the application and to answer specific questions. These focussed on its justification for relying on section 30(c) of FOISA to withhold the information requested in parts 3a and 4a. The Authority was also invited to comment on the Applicant's dissatisfaction with its handling of parts 5b and 5c.
17. The Applicant was also invited to provide any further comments she wished to make on the public interest in the disclosure of the information requested in parts 3a and 4a (withheld under section 30(c) of FOISA), and to explain why she remained dissatisfied with the Authority's handling of parts 5b and 5c given all the information for these parts had been disclosed.
18. Both parties provided submissions to the Commissioner.

Commissioner's analysis and findings

19. The Commissioner has considered all of the submissions made to him by the Applicant and the Authority.

Section 30(c) (Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs) – parts 3a and 4a of request

20. Section 30(c) of FOISA provides that information is exempt information if its disclosure would otherwise prejudice substantially, or be likely to prejudice substantially, the effective conduct of public affairs. This exemption is subject to the public interest test in section 2(1)(b) of FOISA.
21. The word "otherwise" distinguishes the harm required from that envisaged by the exemptions in section 30(a) and (b). This is a broad exemption and the Commissioner expects any public authority applying it to show what specific harm would (or would be likely to) be caused to the conduct of public affairs by disclosure of the information, and how that harm would be expected to follow from disclosure.
22. There is no definition of "substantial prejudice" in FOISA, but the Commissioner considers the harm in question would require to be of real and demonstrable significance. The authority must also be able to satisfy the Commissioner that the harm would, or would be likely to, occur: therefore, the authority needs to establish a real risk or likelihood of actual harm occurring as a consequence of disclosure at some time in the near (certainly the foreseeable) future, not simply that the harm is a remote possibility.

The Authority's submissions

23. In its submissions to the Commissioner, the Authority argued that it had provided as much information as possible to the Applicant, and only a small amount of information was exempt from disclosure. It submitted that additional information had also been provided to assist the Applicant as far as possible, including themes to all the interview question types and the generic scoring guide.
24. The Authority remained satisfied that disclosure of the two particular documents requested would have been sufficiently burdensome to distort the ongoing recruitment process at the material time, and would have compromised the fairness of that process. The Authority commented that this had been clearly explained to the Applicant at each stage of the request.

25. The Authority also considered that disclosure would prejudice its ability to offer an effective service through selecting and recruiting the right candidates, and also its ability to offer a fair recruitment process. It explained that the Applicant's request was received during a round of recruitment which was one of a number of recruitment rounds, where each round used the same (or very similar) questions and scoring methodology. The Authority maintained that disclosure of the interview questions and scoring methodology, during that recruitment process, would give those candidates in future rounds, who had seen the questions in advance, a significant advantage over those who had not, and over how their answers were graded by recruiting panel members.
26. The Authority explained that the recruitment process had changed significantly during the 17 month period between the date of the Applicant's initial request and the disclosure of the information requested in parts 3a and 4a, and this was why it was now able to disclose the interview questions and scoring criteria, i.e. at the appropriate time.
27. The Authority was satisfied that it had demonstrated that initially withholding a small amount of information surrounding the interview questions and scoring criteria of a "live" interview process was correct at the material time and disclosure [at that time] would almost certainly have caused significant prejudice to ongoing and future recruitment rounds.
28. The Authority was further satisfied that it had provided as much information as possible at each stage, when it was appropriate to do so. It remained of the view that some interviewees, who had seen the interview questions they were to be asked and so knew how panellists would score responses, would have a substantial advantage over others who did not have access to that information, and this would significantly hinder the Authority's ability to select the best candidate for the role.

The Applicant's submissions

29. In her application to the Commissioner (prior to full disclosure of the information by the Authority), the Applicant argued that the Authority had already released information about the nature, type and focus of the interview questions, but had not explained why disclosure would disrupt its recruitment process.
30. The Applicant referred to section 31.21 of the NHS Scotland Agenda for Change handbook which states that "*A written record of all decisions should be kept for a minimum of six months*". She argued that, as such a record already existed, disclosure of the interview questions would not place an added burden on, and diversion of, resources, as claimed by the Authority in its review outcome.
31. The Applicant also referred to section 31.22 of the NHS Scotland Agenda for Change handbook which states that "*a means of monitoring the selection process should be agreed at local level*". She argued that it was not possible to judge whether the process was fair without having information about the scoring criteria. She also believed it was not clear why disclosing the scoring criteria would place an added burden on, and diversion of, Authority resources.
32. The Applicant further submitted that the questions from past interview rounds were widely known within the Authority, and that some aspects of the scoring criteria and model answers were known to some internal candidates: she believed candidates and interviewers were not asked to keep them confidential after interviews had taken place. In the Applicant's view, withholding the information disadvantaged external candidates, and those internal

candidates who did not work with colleagues who had that knowledge. The Applicant argued that disclosure of the interview questions would therefore provide a more level playing field.

33. Following the Authority's full disclosure of the interview questions and the scoring criteria on 8 August 2023, the Applicant was asked whether she still wished to continue with her application for a decision by the Commissioner. In response, the Applicant stated that she still did not agree with the reasons for withholding the information at the time of the request as per the arguments previously stated.

The Commissioner's views on section 30(c)

34. The Commissioner has taken account of all of the relevant submissions, together with the withheld information.
35. In assessing whether the exemption in section 30(c) applies, the Commissioner has taken account of a number of factors, including the timing of the request. He must make his decision based on the Authority's position at the time it issued its review outcome.
36. The Commissioner notes that, while the Authority has since fully disclosed the information originally withheld at review stage under section 30(c) of FOISA, it maintains that the exemption was properly applied to this information at the material time.
37. The Commissioner notes that the Applicant's request was received during an ongoing round of recruitment (which involved a number of rounds), all of which used the same (or similar) interview questions and scoring mechanism. The Commissioner agrees that disclosure of the information requested during that process, would have given candidates (who had been able to access that information through public disclosure) substantial advantage over those who had not, thereby significantly impacting the Authority's ability to select the best candidate for the role.
38. The Commissioner recognises that disclosure of information at that time, relating to the ongoing interview process, would have significantly prejudiced ongoing and future rounds of recruitment by impacting not only the Authority's ability to offer an effective service through the recruitment and selection of the right candidates, but also its ability to offer a fair recruitment process.
39. The Commissioner also concurs that, were the information disclosed during the recruitment process, this would have compromised fairness, and any future rounds would have required the Authority to re-write interview questions and model answers to circumvent this. He accepts that this would have been sufficiently burdensome to distort the recruitment process at the material time.
40. In conclusion, therefore, the Commissioner is satisfied that, if the information requested in parts 3a and 4a had been disclosed at the time of the Authority's review outcome, this would otherwise prejudice substantially, or be likely to prejudice substantially, the effective conduct of public affairs. He therefore finds that the Authority was entitled to rely on the exemption in section 30(c) of FOISA to withhold this information at the time it issued its review outcome.

Public interest test – section 30(c)

41. Section 30(c) is subject to the public interest test required by section 2(1)(b) of FOISA. As the Commissioner has found that the exemption in section 30(c) was correctly applied to the withheld information in parts 3a and 4a at the time of the Authority's review, he is now therefore required to consider whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public

interest in disclosing that information was outweighed by the public interest in maintaining the exemption at that time.

The Authority's submissions on the public interest – section 30(c)

42. In its review outcome, the Authority recognised the public interest in disclosure of the information which would:
- contribute to informing public debate;
 - lead to increased scrutiny of the process which could lead to improvements in practice, and
 - allow transparency in decision-making in the recruitment process.
43. However, the Authority also considered there was no public interest in disclosure of information that:
- could reveal enough about the nature, type and focus of questions (part 3a) or selection procedure (part 4a) to disrupt the recruitment process;
 - would result in a requirement for its HR function to review the questions and model answers, placing an unnecessary burden and diversion to resources (part 3a), or would require the Authority to rethink the process which would take time and effort (part 4a);
 - would advantage those candidates who were aware of its disclosure (e.g. internal candidates, those who check the Authority's disclosure log) (parts 3a and 4a), and
 - would impact its capacity to offer a fair and effective recruitment and selection process at each round, both current and future (part 4a).
44. The Authority also considered there was a strong public benefit in ensuring resources were not diverted unnecessarily, and in preventing disruption to the operation of its recruitment processes at a time of pressured demand on public health services (part 4a).
45. On balance, the Authority concluded [at the time of its review outcome] that the public interest favoured maintaining the exemption and withholding the information.

The Applicant's submissions on the public interest – section 30(c)

46. In response to the request for comments on the public interest in disclosure of the information withheld under section 30(c) for parts 3a and 4a of the request, the Applicant confirmed that she wished to rely on the arguments she had previously provided, which are rehearsed in paragraphs 29-32 above.

The Commissioner's view on the public interest – section 30(c)

47. The Commissioner has taken account of all of the relevant submissions from both parties, together with the withheld information in this case (i.e. the interview questions and the scoring mechanism). He is required to balance the public interest in disclosure of the information requested against the public interest in maintaining the exemption, at the time of the Authority's review outcome. In the context of FOISA, the public interest should be considered as "something which is of serious concern and benefit to the public".

48. As rehearsed above, the Commissioner has already accepted that disclosure of the interview questions and the scoring mechanism at review stage would, or would have been likely to, cause substantial prejudice to the effective conduct of the Authority's public affairs.
49. The Commissioner has considered the Applicant's arguments that disclosure of the information would create a more level playing field. He does not concur with this view, however, as much would be dependent on whether or not any candidates had actually been able to access the information.
50. The Commissioner has also given consideration to the Applicant's belief that it would not be possible to judge if the process was fair, without having access to the scoring criteria. In the Commissioner's view, the fact that interview questions and scoring mechanisms are set, recorded and shared with interviewers goes some way to satisfying the public interest in knowing that a fair recruitment process is being carried out. However, to disclose that information, while that process was ongoing, would be akin to disclosing exam papers in advance of an exam. Candidates would be able to provide "schooled" answers or could even ask another individual to prepare them on their behalf in advance of an interview, which would negate any "on the spot" thinking and responding by candidates. The Commissioner considers that this goes against the whole concept of an interview process, as interviewers could be misled through being given misinformation by candidates. This could lead to the wrong candidates being selected, which would not be in the public interest.
51. The Commissioner also accepts that if the information were disclosed part-way during the recruitment process, the Authority would likely have to rethink the interview questions and model answers for any subsequent rounds of interview, in the interests of fairness. He recognises that this would require time and effort, and place an unnecessary burden on the Authority's resources which, again, would not be in the public interest.
52. In conclusion, the Commissioner concludes that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
53. The Commissioner therefore finds that the Authority was entitled to withhold the information requested in parts 3a and 4a (i.e. the interview questions and scoring mechanism) under the exemption in section 30(c) of FOISA, when it issued its review outcome.

Pats 5b and 5c of request

The Applicant's comments on parts 5b and 5c

54. In her application to the Commissioner, the Applicant was dissatisfied that the Authority had provided a range of numbers in its official response that would not allow calculation of comparative rates. She acknowledged that the Authority had provided the required information by separate email [on 7 April 2023].
55. The Applicant was asked to clarify her reasons of dissatisfaction, given the Authority had fully disclosed the information requested in these parts, prior to making her application to the Commissioner.
56. In response, the Applicant believed that the Authority had not been transparent in its replies and had tried to hide information relating to the comparative success rate of two groups of candidates. She argued that the figures provided originally and after her first reply did not allow the calculation of comparative rates, and she could only assume that they were published in a deliberate attempt to mislead. She stated that she would like the Authority to recognise that its replies were misleading.

The Authority's comments on parts 5b and 5c

57. In its submissions to the Commissioner, the Authority commented that it had made every effort to be as transparent as possible in its responses and did not intentionally hide information. It submitted that it aimed to provide as much information as possible, as was appropriate, while ensuring it continued to deliver a recruitment process that was fair and equitable to all candidates.

The Commissioner's views - parts 5b and 5c

58. The Commissioner notes that the Authority had fully disclosed the information requested in parts 5b and 5c prior to the Applicant making her application to him. He has also considered the Applicant's dissatisfaction that it took a number of attempts for the Authority to provide the information she required.
59. The Commissioner also notes that the Authority has submitted it was as transparent as possible in its responses, it had not intentionally hidden any information, and aimed to disclose as much as possible when it was appropriate to do so, while at the same time ensuring it continued to deliver a fair and equitable recruitment process.
60. The Commissioner has therefore considered whether the responses provided by the Authority (initially and at review stage) were reasonable, and whether it could have interpreted these parts of the request differently from the clarifications subsequently provided in the Applicant's request for review, and in her email of 4 April 2022.
61. It is clear that, at initial response stage, the Authority did not have any of these additional clarifications. While it could be argued that the Authority's initial response to part 5b was reasonable (based on the wording of the request), the Commissioner accepts that it *could* possibly have provided a breakdown of external and internal non-ATI candidates for part 5c, but this was not specified in the original request. That said, the Commissioner is required to consider the Authority's response at review stage, and not its initial response.
62. At review stage, the Applicant provided what she considered to be additional clarification of what she was looking for (denominator, total number of candidates, successful/unsuccessful, those who had/had not been inducted on ATI). In the Commissioner's view, the Authority not only fully complied with this clarified request, but also appears to have provided some additional details and data in its review outcome.
63. In her subsequent email of 4 April 2022, the Applicant asked the Authority to provide a further breakdown of the data with additional details (which had not been specified either in the initial request, or in her request for review). The Authority duly provided this in full, as an update to its review outcome. In the Commissioner's view, this goes over and above what was set out in the original request and request for review. The Commissioner considers it reasonable that the Authority could not have been expected to know that the Applicant was looking for this additional level of detail (when it issued its review outcome). Even if this had been specified by the Applicant in her request for review, the Commissioner considers there was no requirement for the Authority to provide this additional information in response to her request, as it appears to have been seeking a level of detail much more than in the original request (i.e. additional information not originally requested, which could have been deemed a new request). The Commissioner considers that the Applicant's expectations here were somewhat unreasonable, when taking into account the wording of parts 5b and 5c of the original request.

64. In conclusion, therefore, the Commissioner finds that the Authority fully complied with section 1(1) of FOISA in responding to parts 5b and 5c of the request.

Decision

The Commissioner finds that the Authority complied with Part 1 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 in responding to the information request made by the Applicant.

Appeal

Should either the Applicant or the Authority wish to appeal against this decision, they have the right to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only. Any such appeal must be made within 42 days after the date of intimation of this decision.

David Hamilton
Scottish Information Commissioner

22 April 2024

Appendix 1: Relevant statutory provisions

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

1 General entitlement

- (1) A person who requests information from a Scottish public authority which holds it is entitled to be given it by the authority.
- (2) The person who makes such a request is in this Part and in Parts 2 and 7 referred to as the “applicant.”
- ...
- (6) This section is subject to sections 2, 9, 12 and 14.

2 Effect of exemptions

- (1) To information which is exempt information by virtue of any provision of Part 2, section 1 applies only to the extent that –
 - ...
 - (b) in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in disclosing the information is not outweighed by that in maintaining the exemption.

...

30 Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs

Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act-

...

- (c) would otherwise prejudice substantially, or be likely to prejudice substantially, the effective conduct of public affairs.

...

47 Application for decision by Commissioner

- (1) A person who is dissatisfied with -
 - (a) a notice under section 21(5) or (9); or
 - (b) the failure of a Scottish public authority to which a requirement for review was made to give such a notice.

may make application to the Commissioner for a decision whether, in any respect specified in that application, the request for information to which the requirement relates has been dealt with in accordance with Part 1 of this Act.

- (2) An application under subsection (1) must -
 - (a) be in writing or in another form which, by reason of its having some permanency, is capable of being used for subsequent reference (as, for example, a recording made on audio or video tape);

- (b) state the name of the applicant and an address for correspondence; and
- (c) specify –
 - (i) the request for information to which the requirement for review relates;
 - (ii) the matter which was specified under sub-paragraph (ii) of section 20(3)(c);
and
 - (iii) the matter which gives rise to the dissatisfaction mentioned in subsection (1).

Appendix 2: Request dated 18 February 2022

In relation to the recruitment process that took place in November 2021 for the position of B6 Information Analyst, I would like to request the following information:

- 1) I understand that the presentation was part of the recruitment process, but it did not count towards the final decision:
 - a) Who made the decision not to score the presentation as part of the final decision?
 - b) What were the reasons for this decision?
- 2) I understand that the interviews were conducted by a team of trained interviewers and the process was overseen by the People Development Manager Caroline Crocker:
 - a) What type of training did the interviewers received?
 - b) How many interviews were conducted and how may interviewers took part in total and in each of the interviews?
 - c) What system was used to ensure consistency?
- 3) I understand that the final stage (and the only one that counted towards a final decision) was an interview which included both technical and competency based questions:
 - a) What were the questions?
 - b) Were all the questions technical or competency based?
 - c) Were they based upon clear criteria in line with the job description and person specification?
- 4) I am assuming that there was a scoring mechanism agreed and communicated to all interviewers to ensure fairness and consistency:
 - a) What was the scoring mechanism for each question?
 - b) Was the scoring mechanism based upon clear criteria in line with the job description and person specification?
- 5) I understand that some B5 Information Analysts in [the Authority] have received specific training as part of the Analysts Training Institute initiative:
 - a) Why has this training not been offered to all B5 Information Analysts in [the Authority]?
 - b) What is the success rate of the Analysts Training Institute B5 analysts who applied to a B6 post?
 - c) What was the equivalent rate for the rest of the applicants?

I believe that it is appropriate for me to request this information, based on the following points from the NHS Scotland Agenda for Change Handbook:

31.20 Selection should be consistently applied and based upon clear criteria which are in line with the job description and person specification.

31.21 A written record of all decisions should be kept for a minimum of six months.

31.22 A means of monitoring the selection process should be agreed at local level.

31.23 Interviews are one means of selecting job applicants. Consideration should be given to the options available. In all cases the process should suit the requirements of the job and be designed to bring out the best in the applicants.