

Welcome to our survey

The Scottish Information Commissioner is seeking a better understanding of the learning and development needs of the staff of Scottish public authorities who want to know more about Freedom of Information (FOI). We also want to find out more about what FOI learning and development support is available in Scotland today.

This survey covers FOI and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) - it is NOT gathering information about data protection training. We'll use the findings of this short survey to identify where we can best focus our efforts to provide authorities with learning and development support which meets their needs.

The survey is completely anonymous, although you may give us your name if you prefer. It should take between 15 and 30 minutes to complete (depending on your answers).

If you have any questions about completing the survey, please call us on 01334 464610 or email enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info

Thank you for your time - it's much appreciated. A survey report will be published on our website at <http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/home/SICReports/OtherReports/Research.asp>

About you

*1. Which type of organisation do you work in?

- Further education
- Higher education
- Local government
- The NHS
- Ombudsman or Commissioner
- The police
- Publicly owned company
- Scottish Parliament or Scottish Government (including agencies)
- Other Scottish public authority (e.g. NDPBs)
- Other (please tell us who below)

About you

***2. Which ONE of the following BEST describes the capacity in which you are completing this survey?**

- I am the Chief Executive (or equivalent) in my organisation
- I have strategic responsibility for learning and development plans and budgets
- I have strategic responsibility for FOI in my authority
- I have strategic responsibility AND I also have a role in delivering FOI
- I deliver FOI as all or part of my role
- I am an employee development professional
- I have a customer facing role in which I may receive information requests
- Other (please tell us below)

Strategic importance of FOI learning and development

*3. Is there any reference to FOI in:

	Yes	No	Don't know	N/A
Your organisation's strategic objectives?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your organisation's performance measures?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Performance objectives for any individual employees?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your authority-wide learning and development plan?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please comment on your responses

*4. Has there been any FOI learning and development activity in your organisation in the last three years?

- Yes
- No

How is FOI learning and development delivered in your authority?

*5. Thinking of the last three years, who has received FOI learning and development in your authority (Tick ALL that apply)

- All staff
- Managers with responsibility for FOI
- Other senior managers/directors
- Staff with specific FOI responsibilities
- Other information governance staff (e.g. records managers)
- Customer service staff (e.g. reception/call centre staff)
- Employee development professionals
- None
- Other (please tell us who below)

*6. Thinking of the last three years, who has delivered FOI learning and development in your organisation? (Tick ALL that apply)

- In-house specialist employee development professionals
- Our own FOI managers
- Our own FOI practitioners
- Other in-house staff (please tell us who in the comment box)
- The Scottish Information Commissioner's staff
- External solicitors
- Other external specialist employee development professionals
- Other external parties (please tell us who in the comment box below)

If you'd like to add any comments on your answers please do so below

***7. Thinking of the last three years, which of the following methods have been used to deliver FOI learning and development in your organisation? (Tick ALL that apply)**

- Staff sent to one-off external events e.g. seminars
- Staff attended external accredited courses/programmes
- Events delivered on the premises by external specialists
- In-house training events
- FOI training materials we have developed in-house
- Staff participating in online training, e.g. webinars, distance learning
- Staff directed to download learning materials from external websites
- Staff directed to the Scottish Information Commissioner's website
- Other (please tell us below)

8. If you have used external specialists, please tell us below who they were, and what type of training they provided for you.

How is FOI learning and development delivered in your authority? (continued...

*9. Thinking of the last three years, when has learning and development been provided? (Tick ALL that apply)

- Part of staff induction
- Part of an established programme of FOI training
- Response to an individual performance need
- Response to individual professional development requirements
- Response in anticipated surge in requests around particular topic
- Other (please tell us when)

*10. Thinking of the last three years, what topics has FOI learning and development covered? (Tick ALL that apply)

- General overview of FOI rights and responsibilities
- General overview of EIRs
- Your FOI processes and procedures
- How to deal with information requests
- Specific exemptions/exceptions, or other more detailed aspects of FOI law
- Briefing to prepare for anticipated requests on a specific subject
- Publication schemes
- Interface between FOI and data protection
- Don't know
- Other (please tell us below)

Expenditure on FOI learning and development

***11. Think of the past three years, has your authority spent any money on FOI learning and development?**

Yes

No

Expenditure on FOI learning and development

***12. Thinking of the past three years, please estimate what has been your authority's average annual expenditure on FOI learning and development?**

- Under £500
- £500 to £999
- £1,000 to £4,999
- £5,000 or over
- Unable to quantify/don't know

Please add any other comments about your FOI budget below

Challenges and barriers to delivering FOI learning and development

We'd like to find out more about the challenges and barriers you face in delivering FOI learning and development in your organisation, and how these might be overcome.

13. Thinking about the level of FOI learning and development made available to staff in your organisation over the last three years, do you think it has been:

- Too much
- About right
- Too little

If you selected "too much", tell us below in what areas you could cut back:

Challenges and barriers (continued)

*14. What is preventing your organisation from meeting its organisational needs for FOI learning and development? (Tick ALL that apply)

- Lack of resources in my organisation
- FOI is not a strategic priority
- Lack of internal demand
- No external provision to meet my organisation's needs
- Lack of skills to deliver training in-house
- External provision is too expensive
- Other reason (please tell us below)

Challenges and barriers (continued)

*15. Thinking of the past three years, why did your authority not provide any FOI learning and development for staff? (Tick ALL that apply)

- Lack of resources in my organisation
- FOI is not a strategic priority
- Lack of internal demand
- No external provision to meet my organisation's needs
- Lack skills to deliver training in-house
- External provision is too expensive
- We do not receive many FOI requests
- Other reason (please tell us below)

16. Please tell us below what, if anything, you think the Scottish Information Commissioner can do to help you overcome these barriers:

Your plans for delivering FOI learning and development in the coming year

***17. Does your organisation intend to undertake any FOI learning and development in the coming year?**

Yes

No

Your plans for delivering FOI learning and development in the coming year (...

***18. Will the amount of FOI learning and development delivered in your organisation in the coming year:**

- Increase a lot
- Increase a little
- Stay about the same
- Decrease a little
- Decrease a lot

Please explain why you have selected your answer:

Your plans for delivering FOI learning and development in the coming year (...

*19. Why will your organisation be reducing (or not delivering) FOI learning and development in the coming year? (Tick up to three answers).

- Lack of resources in my organisation
- FOI is not a strategic priority
- Lack of internal demand
- No external provision to meet my organisation's needs
- Lack skills to deliver in-house
- External provision is too expensive
- We do not receive many FOI requests
- Other reason (please tell us what it is)

20. Please tell us if there is anything the Scottish Information Commissioner can do to help you overcome these barriers.

Preferred approach to FOI learning and development in the future

Here, we'd like to explore what factors will affect your decisions on how to take FOI learning and development forward.

21. What will be the critical factors influencing your choice of approach to FOI learning and development over the next three years?

(Please rank in order of importance with 1=most important. The responses will automatically re-order themselves as you assign them a ranking)

<input type="text"/>	Availability of skills in-house
<input type="text"/>	Strategic priorities of the organisation
<input type="text"/>	Availability of external expertise
<input type="text"/>	Cost- it must be affordable
<input type="text"/>	Other factors (see question below)

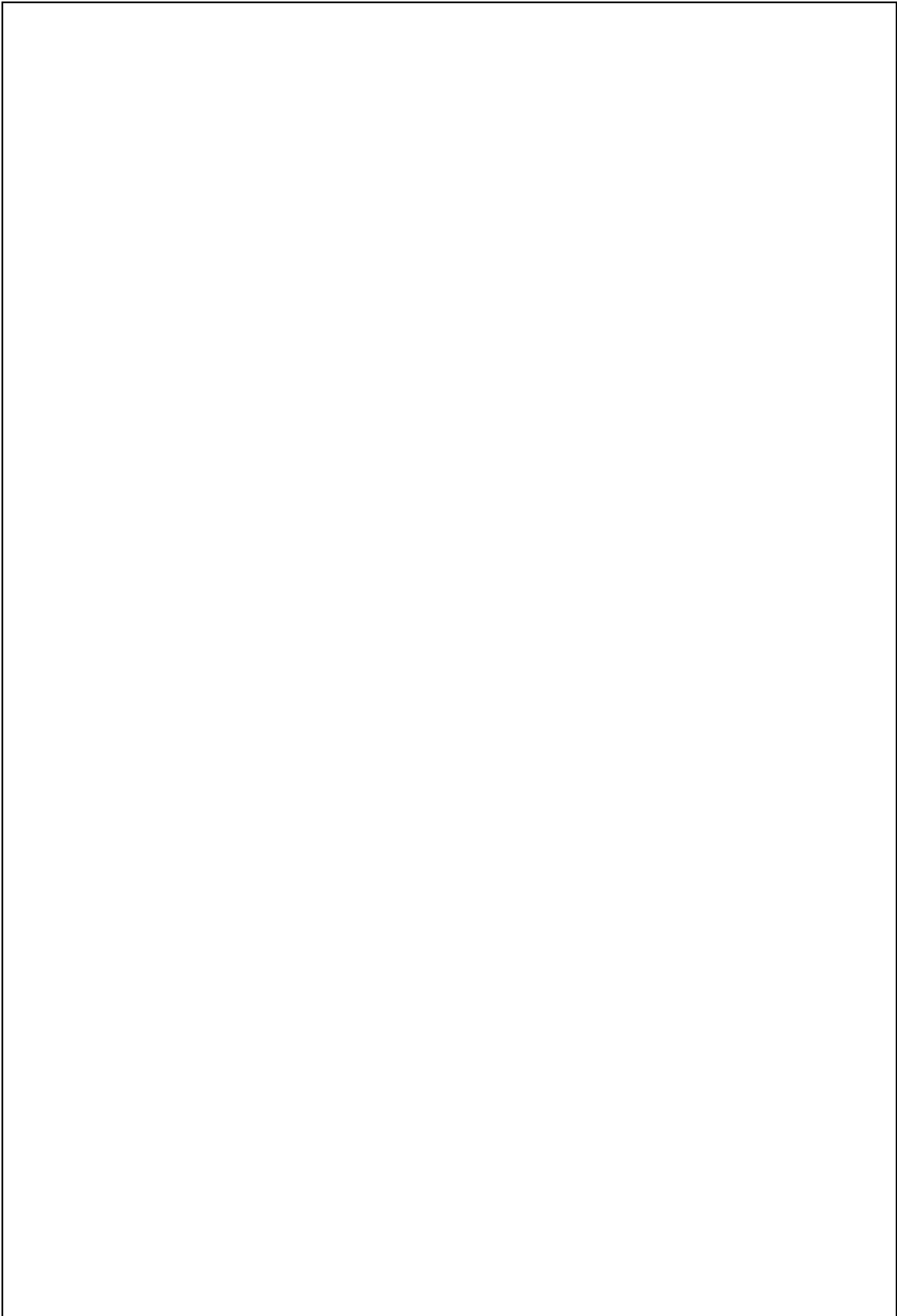
22. If there are other factors which will influence your choice of approach, not listed on the previous question, can you tell us what they are below:

23. What would be your preferred methods of delivering FOI learning and development over the next three years?

(Please rank in order of importance with 1=most important. The responses will automatically re-order themselves as you assign them a ranking)

<input type="text"/>	Face-to-face events e.g. training seminars
<input type="text"/>	Self-directed e-learning materials
<input type="text"/>	Online training e.g. webinars, distance learning programmes
<input type="text"/>	Peer support and coaching
<input type="text"/>	Other methods (see question below)

24. If there are other factors which will influence your preferred methods of delivery, not listed on the previous question, can you tell us what they are below:



Your knowledge and understanding of FOI

***25. Now, think of you OWN ROLE in the organisation. Do YOU need any FOI skills and knowledge in order to do your job?**

Yes

No

Your knowledge and understanding of FOI (continued)

***26. Think about your own role in your organisation. For each category below, tick the column which best describes the level of FOI skill and knowledge you NEED in order to do your job.**

	Detailed	Moderate	Basic	None	Don't know
Current/future development in FOI law/policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appreciation of contribution FOI can make to my organisation's efficiency/performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My authority's FOI responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My authority's processes/procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Practical knowledge of FOI law relating to dealing with requests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Practical knowledge of FOI law relating to dealing with reviews	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Details of specific legal elements e.g. exemptions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Best FOI practice in other authorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
About publication schemes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
About the EIRs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***27. Think about your own role in the organisation. For each category below, tick the column which best describes the level of skill and knowledge you CURRENTLY HAVE.**

	Everything I need	Most of what I need	Some of what I need	None of what I need	Not applicable	Don't know
Current/future development in FOI law/policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appreciation of contribution FOI can make to my organisation's efficiency/performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My authority's FOI responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My authority's processes/procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Practical knowledge of FOI law relating to dealing with requests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Practical knowledge of FOI law relating to dealing with reviews	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Details of specific legal elements e.g. exemptions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Best FOI practice in other authorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
About publication schemes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
About the EIRs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. Where, if anywhere, would you most like to improve your FOI knowledge and skills? (Please be as specific as possible):

Learning and development resources available to you

We'd like to find out more about the learning and development resources which are available to you, and how useful you find them.

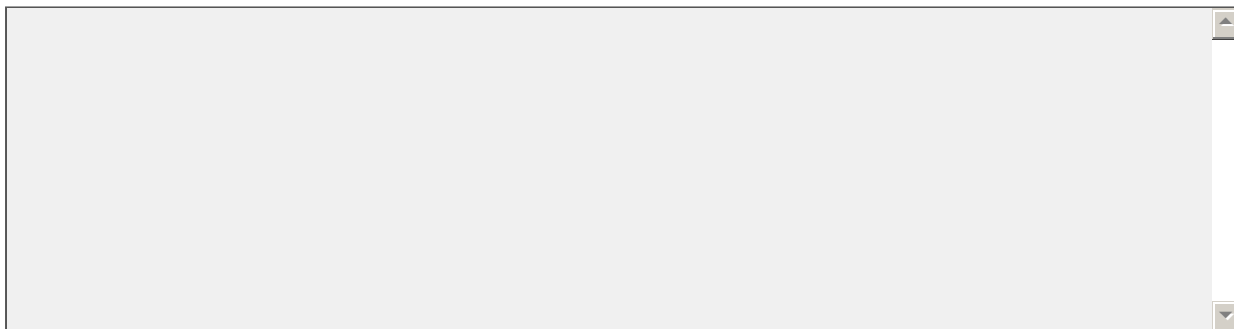
*29. Think about your own role in your organisation over the past three years. How have you learned about FOI? (Tick all that apply)

- I have attended one-off external events e.g. seminars
- I have attended external accredited courses/programmes
- I have attended meetings with other FOI colleagues in my sector
- I have attended events hosted in my organisation delivered by external specialists
- I attend events delivered by my colleagues
- I have used FOI training materials developed by my authority
- I have participated in online external training e.g. webinars
- I have downloaded learning materials from external websites
- I have engaged in FOI conversations e.g. on social media, blogs
- I have not done any specific activity to learn about FOI
- Other (please tell us what)

*30. Think about your answer to the previous question, how would you rate the usefulness of each of these methods in helping you do the FOI element of your job?

	Very useful	Quite useful	A little useful	Not useful	Haven't used
One-off external events e.g. seminars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
External accredited courses/programmes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meetings with other FOI colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Events in my authority delivered by external specialists	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Events delivered by my colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FOI training materials delivered by my organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online external resources e.g. webinars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Download learning material from external websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FOI conversations e.g. social media, blogs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. Thinking of the past three years, what has been the most useful way for you to learn about FOI?

A large, empty rectangular text input field with a vertical scrollbar on the right side. The field is currently blank, intended for the user to provide their answer to the question above.

The Commissioner's website

***32. Have you visited the Scottish Information Commissioner website in the past year?**

Yes

No

The Commissioner's website (continued)

* 33. In the past year, how often have you used the following resources on the Commissioner's website to learn about FOI?

	Regularly	Occasionally	Never - not relevant to me	Never - wasn't aware of it
Commissioner's decision notices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decisions round-up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inform newsletter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Your rights" section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Briefings on exemptions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Briefings on key concepts e.g. public interest test	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Briefings on EIRs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Video case studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Frequently asked questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Publication scheme guidance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Assessing and improving practice" section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Practice assessment reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. Please tell us which (if any) other parts of the Commissioner's website you have used:

*** 35. Thinking about your answer for the previous two questions, how useful did you find the resources on the Commissioner's website in helping you do your job?**

	Very useful	Quite useful	A little useful	Not useful	Haven't used
Commissioner's decision notices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decisions round-up	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inform newsletter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Your rights" section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Briefings on exemptions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Briefings on key concepts e.g. public interest test	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Briefings on EIRs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Video case studies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Frequently asked questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Publication scheme guidance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Assessing and improving practice" section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Practice assessment reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research reports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36. If you have ticked "not useful" for any of the above options, please tell us why below.

37. Please can you tell us what we could do to improve our website in supporting your learning and development.

The Commissioner's events

***38. Have you attended any events supported or organised by the Scottish Information Commissioner in the last three years?**

- Yes
- No

The Commissioner's events (continued)

* 39. How often have you attended the following events in the last three years?

	Three times or more	Twice	Once	Never
Centre for Freedom of Information Seminar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Holyrood FOI Conference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training or presentation given specifically for my organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. Tell us more details about the specific events you can recall having attended (e.g. dates, topics/titles). If you cannot recall exactly, tell us what you remember.

* 41. In general, thinking about your answer to the previous question, how useful did you find the events you attended in helping you do your job?

	Very useful	Quite useful	A little useful	Not useful	Haven't attended
Centre for Freedom of Information Seminar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Holyrood FOI Conference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training or presentation given specifically for my organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

42. Please can you tell us what we could do to improve the usefulness of these events to you:

Enquiry handling services

***43. How often have you called or emailed our enquiry service in the last three years?**

- More than five times
- Between one and five times
- Once
- Never - didn't need to
- Never - I didn't know the Commissioner had an enquiry service

Challenges and barriers you face

We want to know what barriers and challenges YOU face, personally, in learning about FOI.

44. Thinking about your OWN ROLE, and the level of FOI learning and development you have had in the last three years, do you think it has been:

- Too much - I have received more learning and development than I needed
- About right - I know what I need to do my job well
- Too little - there are gaps in my skills and knowledge

If you selected "too much", tell us below what you received which was beyond what you required.

Challenges and barriers you face (continued)

*45. What is preventing you from getting the FOI learning and development you need?

- Lack of budget in my authority
- FOI is not a strategic priority for my managers
- Unable to find provision which meets my needs
- I'm too busy with my day job to find the time
- Other reason (please tell us below)

46. What, if anything, could the Scottish Information Commissioner do to help you overcome these difficulties?

Last comments

47. Is there anything else you would like to say about how we could help you improve your FOI knowledge and skills, going forward?

48. Is there anything we have not asked you about that you would like to share with us?

What is your name

This survey is anonymous, but if you would be happy for us to contact you to discuss your responses, or to participate in any further research we are undertaking, please provide your name and contact details in the box below.

49. What is your name?

And finally

THANK YOU for taking the time to complete this online survey. Your responses will help us develop our approach to supporting FOI learning and development in a way which best meets your needs.

A survey report will be published in due course on our website at ..

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this survey, please contact us on 01334 464610 and ask for Susan Gray or sarah Hutchison.