

5 July 2022

### **Request under The Freedom Of Information (Scotland) Act 2002**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request dated 31 May 2022, in which you requested the following:

1. What information is held on the political affiliation of board members and senior staff within your organisation
2. The current annual cost of press and media for your organisation, and the total number of personnel employed to handle press and media for your organisation
3. What guidelines have been issued to your organisation by the Scottish Government on press releases and media

On 10 June 2022, we wrote to you seeking clarification as follows:

On your second point, are you seeking to understand the number and cost of people directly employed for the purposes of producing press releases and dealing with external media enquiries for VisitScotland?

On your third question, what is meant by the term 'media' in this context? Is it relating to media enquiries?

On 12 June 2022 you responded with clarification as follows:

For the first point of clarification, yes, that is correct.

For the second, this can include guidelines issued by the Scottish Government covering how to respond to general press enquiries or information on what to say in responses to enquiries from the press (newspapers, the BBC, online journals etc).

We have considered your requests, and can respond as follows:

1. We do not hold any information on the political affiliation of board members and senior staff in the organisation aside from any affiliation contained in the Board members' Registers of Interest.

VisitScotland Chairman Lord Thurso has declared interest as a Member of the House of Lords, as required this is published in his Register of Interests, available [here](#).

2. The details provided relate to staff that include producing press releases and engaging with media as part of their functions, broken down into the various departments/directorates for clarity. It should be noted that these employees also carry out a wide variety of other tasks not directly related to this function:
  - **Corporate Communications:** There are eight members of staff (7.4 FTE) in the Corporate Communications department whose job descriptions include producing press releases, pitching story ideas and dealing with media enquiries about VisitScotland and the tourism sector. Their audiences include Scottish, UK and some international media outlets. Their remit also includes corporate social media channels, stakeholder engagement and briefings. The combined salary is £296,257. Including pension contributions and other employment costs, the overall cost is £385,134.
  - **Consumer PR:** There are nine members of staff in the Consumer PR team whose job descriptions include producing press releases, pitching story ideas and dealing with media enquiries about VisitScotland and the tourism sector. Their audiences include predominantly international media outlets, but also include Scottish & UK consumer titles. Their remit also includes broader media relations, influencer and stakeholder engagement and briefings. The combined salary is £312,182. Including pension contributions and other employment costs, the overall cost is £405,836.
  - **Events Directorate:** There are seven staff in VisitScotland's Events Directorate whose job description includes working collaboratively with VisitScotland communications colleagues to draft or contribute to press releases and media enquiries relating specifically to funded events and the wider events industry. Their audience includes Scottish and UK media outlets. The main remit of their roles is to deliver Scotland's national events strategy by raising the country's reputation as the perfect stage for events, supporting and securing a portfolio of events, and developing industry and consumer facing communications to support the events and tourism sector. The combined salary is £259,931, including pension contributions and other employment costs, the overall cost is £337,910.30.
  
3. We have not been provided with guidelines or information from Scottish Government regarding how to respond to enquiries from the press.

We hope this information is helpful to you. If, however, you are not satisfied with our response or the manner in which we have dealt with your application, you may in the first instance contact our Chief Executive, Malcolm Roughead, whose contact details are set out below:

Mr Malcolm Roughead  
Chief Executive  
VisitScotland  
Ocean Point One  
94 Ocean Drive  
Edinburgh, EH6 6JH  
Telephone: 0131 472 2201  
Fax: 0131 472 2223  
E-mail: [malcolm.roughead@visitscotland.com](mailto:malcolm.roughead@visitscotland.com)

If you wish to request a review of your application under either the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 or the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004, your request should be submitted to us in writing, or another permanent format (for example e-mail or voice recording), and be received by us within 40 days of the date of this letter. Any request for a review should also set out, in as much detail as possible, the reasons why you are not satisfied with our response or the manner in which we have dealt with your application.

If you are still not satisfied with our handling of your application after we have responded to your request for a review, you have a right to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner for a decision on whether we have dealt with your request in accordance with the Act.

The Scottish Information Commissioner may be contacted at:

Scottish Information Commissioner  
Kinburn Castle  
Doubledykes Road  
St Andrews, Fife  
KY16 9DS  
Telephone: 01334 464610  
Fax: 01334 464611  
E-mail: [enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info)

You also have the right to appeal to the Court of Session in Scotland on a point of law concerning our response.

Yours sincerely,  
Government and Parliamentary Affairs Executive  
VisitScotland