

22 October 2026

Dear

Complaint in respect of ATISN 27393 - Single Advice Fund

I am writing in response to your email of 2 October 2026 concerning the Welsh Government's response to ATISN 27393, in which you requested an internal review. I have now undertaken the review and have set out below your original freedom of information request, followed by my findings on each aspect of your complaint.

The FOI request:

- **A copy of Riverside Advice Ltd Single Advice Fund 2025-2028 funding application form or the answers submitted as part of the application.**
- **The scoring breakdown for all applications made for the Single Advice Fund in the same region and opportunity as Riverside Advice Ltd.**
- **Riverside Advice Ltd's current reported figures of cases and level of advice reported to Welsh Government as the funder.**

The complaint:

- **Whether Welsh Government complied with sections 10 and 17 in its response of 21 September.**

I assess the requirement to provide a response within 20 working days under Section 10 of the FOIA was met. The request was received on 24th August 2026 and a substantive response was issued before the stated deadline of 21st September 2026.

Section 17 of the FOIA requires that where information is being withheld, the authority must issue a refusal notice stating:

- which exemption(s) it is relying on;
- why the exemption applies (where required); and
- details of appeal rights.

The response dated the 21 September states:

"The Welsh Government considers that some of the information may be exempt from disclosure as its release could cause harm or prejudice. We are currently reviewing this information and the applicability of any exemptions..."

The letter does not:

- identify any specific exemption(s) being considered;

- expressly state that extra time is required to conduct a public interest test; and,
- does not explain which qualified exemption may apply.

ICO guidance states that where a public authority needs additional time to consider the public interest test, it should normally issue an initial refusal notice identifying the exemption being relied upon and explaining why further time is needed.

The authority should have identified the relevant exemption(s) at the time it informed the requester that disclosure was being deferred.

I therefore uphold your complaint in relation to not having met the requirements under section 17 of the FOIA. Welsh Government apologises for this error.

- **Whether section 43(2) is properly engaged in respect of each material category of information withheld.**

Having fully considered this matter, I consider that the redacted information is commercially sensitive and personal and therefore meets the exemptions in sections 43(2) and 40(2) of the FOIA.

- **Whether the public-interest test has been applied with sufficient specificity.**

Having taken into account ICO guidance, I assess that the public interest test favours maintaining the exemption under sections 43(2) and 40(2) of the FOIA as set out in the response letter of 30 September. I can confirm that only that specific information to which the exemptions apply have been redacted.

- **Whether any further information can be disclosed through narrower redaction.**

I have reviewed the redactions and assess that all withheld information falls within the exemptions cited in the response letter dated 30 September 2026.

- **Whether adequate searches were undertaken before concluding that the information requested at point 3 is not held.**

The Welsh Government electronic filing system, which covers the whole organisation, was searched. In addition, policy leads who were most likely to hold relevant information were contacted directly and asked to confirm whether they held any information relevant to the request. We are therefore satisfied that adequate and proportionate searches were undertaken.

No information relating to point 3 of the request was identified. This is because it was not a requirement of the performance management arrangements to report case numbers or levels of advice provided to Welsh Government.

Next steps

I have considered your complaint in accordance with the procedure outlined in the [Welsh Government's Practical Guide for Making Requests for Information](#) which is available by post on request or via the internet.

If you remain dissatisfied with this response you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Deputy Director
Community Safety Division
Welsh Government