

# Freedom of Information

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## Headlines

- Cambridgeshire County Council ordered to release names after active travel FOI appeal, p.18
- Welsh First Minister was deleting messages so they couldn't be caught by FOIA, it emerges, p.19
- Isle of Man Commissioner issues social media advice to public servants following FOI request, p.20

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## Contempt of court referrals will be made, says FOI Director

The Information Commissioner Office's Director of Freedom of Information and Transparency, Warren Seddon, has published his latest FOI [Director's Update](#) ('the Update'), revealing imminent changes to how the regulator enforces the law on non-compliant public authorities.

The Update notes that the ICO has successfully cleared its FOI backlog and resolved cases at a record pace. Mr Seddon thanked the ICO's FOI team "for another incredible effort over the last year following their achievements clearing

our Covid-related backlog".

Despite the gains, the Director notes that as the ICO enters the last year of ICO25 (its Strategic Plan), the volume of cases means that the ICO's caseload and its age profile is creeping higher. Because of this, the regulator is exploring ways to do things differently, including trying to identify further efficiencies in how it works, from simplifying processes and supporting people to exploring how new technology can help the ICO to work smarter.

The ICO has also carried out training on dispute resolution to help it to resolve cases in different ways, and will be seeking to embed this approach over the next 12 months.

The Update states that the ICO is further identifying the simple changes it can make to improve its service for staff, public bodies and those that come to it for help.

One change it has already implemented is to its decision notices. From now on, where the ICO finds a public body to have made

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## Regulator asks for feedback on FOI resources

The ICO is asking for feedback on its restructured FOI resources. It wants FOI practitioners and other interested parties to complete a [survey](#) by 16th May 2024.

The development follows the ICO's launch of its Upstream Regulation team, whose aim is to proactively prevent breaches of the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations.

The team was established to provide more support for public authorities dealing with FOI requests. This includes the provision of FOI resources through the ICO's website or by attending relevant events and the publication of enforcement notices, information notices and practice recommendations.

While the stream of work is ongoing, the ICO is seeking views from public

authorities and other FOI practitioners to help it in planning the next stages, as well as feeding into a review once the workstream is complete.

The survey, which the ICO says takes around 10 to 15 minutes to complete, seeks views on the FOI resources, impacts to date and background information about respondents.