

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST			
Request Ref:	FOI DOF/2025-371		
Request Summary:	FOI request asking for several sets of minutes from Ministerial meetings between 01 January and 31 March 2025.		
Information details:	Exception applied	Disclosure	Non-disclosure
<p>Document 1 Joint mtg with Minister O'Dowd, Minister Kimmins and NI Chamber, Construction Employers Federation and Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations</p> <p>Document 3 Mtg with Chris Quinn, NI Commissioner for Children & Young People</p> <p>Document 5a Introductory meeting with the Rt Hon Darren Jones MP,</p>	<p>Section 35(1)(a) which protects the formulation of policy and communications between Ministers.</p>	<p>There is a general public interest in disclosure of information, openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government.</p> <p>The Department recognises the decisions Ministers make may have a significant impact on the lives of citizens and there is a public interest in their deliberations being transparent.</p> <p>There is a public interest in individuals being able to exercise their rights under the FOIs, in order to enhance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure would weaken Ministers' ability to discuss controversial and sensitive topics free from premature public scrutiny. • Ministers must be able to discuss policy freely and frankly, exchange views on available options and understand their possible implications. • The candour of all involved would be affected by their assessment of whether the content of the discussions will be disclosed prematurely. • If discussions were routinely made public there is a risk that Ministers may feel inhibited from being frank and candid with one another. As a result the quality of debate underlying collective decision

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST			
Request Ref:	DoF/2025-0371		
Request summary:	FOI request asking for several sets of minutes from Ministerial meetings between 01 January and 31 March 2025.		
Information details:	Exemption applied	Disclosure	Non-disclosure
	(Please complete both columns to show all factors have been considered)		
Document 7 Any minutes between the Minister and Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Services, Reform and Digitalisation, Jack Chambers TD.	Section 27 - International relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a presumption of a general public interest in disclosure especially as relates to funding that could potentially benefit North South Bodies. • Disclosure promotes accountability and transparency in how public money is spent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effective conduct of the North South relations depends upon maintaining the trust and confidence of the South, therefore allowing the free and frank exchange of information. • Disclosure of the information would be likely to harm the relationship between the North and South
<p>PUBLIC INTEREST DECISION: After weighing up the competing public interest considerations, we consider it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information held should be withheld from disclosure <i>Section 27(1) International Relations</i> and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.</p> <p>Signed: Emma-Jayne Hunter Date: 3 July 2025</p>			

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST			
Request Ref:	DoF/2025-0371		
Request summary:	FOI request asking for several sets of minutes from Ministerial meetings between 01 January and 31 March 2025.		
Information details:	Exemption applied	Disclosure	Non-disclosure
	(Please complete both columns to show all factors have been considered)		
Document 10 Meeting with Sean O'Brien, President of the Teamsters Union	Section 43 – Commercial Interests	<p>To show compliance with the FOI Act by disclosing information held by the Department as a Public Authority.</p> <p>There is a general public interest in the accountability, openness and transparency of government, and to promote public understanding.</p> <p>The right of the public to know that public money is being spent wisely.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a public interest in ensuring that private sector companies can discuss their business in a safe space, without risk of their commercially sensitive information being released. • Disclosing the commercially sensitive information of independent bodies may jeopardise the working relationships between them, Ministers and departmental officials, while also hampering the ability for future discussions to take place by reducing confidence in the ability for confidentially to be maintained by erosion of the concept of safe space for discussions to take place free of external interference.

PUBLIC INTEREST DECISION: After weighing up the competing public interest considerations, we consider it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information held should be withheld from disclosure under *Section 43 Commercial Interests* and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Signed: Ciarrai Conlan

Date: 5 September 2025

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST			
Request Ref:	DoF/2025-0371		
Request summary:	FOI request asking for several sets of minutes from Ministerial meetings between 01 January and 31 March 2025.		
Information details:	Exemption	Disclosure	Non-disclosure
	applied	(Please complete both columns to show all factors have been considered)	

<p>Document 4</p> <p>F:ISC meeting Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Rt Hon Darren Jones MP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, Mark Drakeford MS and Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance Shona Robison MSP</p>	<p>Section 28 – Relations within the United Kingdom.</p>	<p>There is a general public interest in disclosure of information, openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government.</p> <p>The Department recognizes the decisions Ministers make may have a significant impact on the lives of citizens and there is a public interest in their deliberations being transparent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a very strong public interest for maintaining good relations between the devolved administrations and the government of the United Kingdom. • This relationship allows for the free and frank exchange of information without inhibition. • There is a reasonable expectation that the information would remain confidential.
<p>Document 13</p> <p>Meeting with Sir Robert Chote, Chair and member of the NI Fiscal Council (FC)</p>	<p>Section 28 – Relations within the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Section 35(1)(a) Formulation of Government policy</p>	<p>There is a public interest in individuals being able to exercise their rights under the FOIs, in order to enhance their understanding of the reasons for decisions taken by senior members of a public body.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosure would weaken Ministers’ ability to discuss controversial and sensitive topics free from premature public scrutiny. • Ministers must be able to discuss policy freely and frankly, exchange views on available options and understand their possible implications. • The candour of all involved would be affected by their assessment of whether the content of the discussions will be disclosed prematurely. • If discussions were routinely made public there is a risk that Ministers may feel inhibited from being frank and candid with one another. As a result the quality of debate underlying collective decision making would

			decline, leading to worse informed and poorer decision making.
--	--	--	--

PUBLIC INTEREST DECISION: After weighing up the competing public interest considerations, we consider it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information held should be withheld from disclosure under *Section 28 Relations with the United Kingdom and Section 35 Formulation of government policy* and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Signed: Sarah Wilson

Date: 8 July 2025

PUBLIC INTEREST TEST			
Request Ref:	DoF/2025-0371		
Request summary:	FOI request asking for several sets of minutes from Ministerial meetings between 01 January and 31 March 2025.		
Information details:	Exemption	Disclosure	Non-disclosure
	applied	(Please complete both columns to show all factors have been considered)	

<p>Document 4</p> <p>F:ISC meeting Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Rt Hon Darren Jones MP, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language, Mark Drakeford MS and Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance Shona Robison MSP</p>	<p>Section 28 – Relations within the United Kingdom.</p>	<p>There is a general public interest in disclosure of information, openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government.</p> <p>The Department recognizes the decisions Ministers make may have a significant impact on the lives of citizens and there is a public interest in their deliberations being transparent.</p> <p>There is a public interest in individuals being able to exercise their rights under the FOIs, in order to enhance their understanding of the reasons for decisions taken by senior members of a public body.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a very strong public interest for maintaining good relations between the devolved administrations and the government of the United Kingdom. • This relationship allows for the free and frank exchange of information without inhibition. • There is a reasonable expectation that the information would remain confidential.
<p>PUBLIC INTEREST DECISION: After weighing up the competing public interest considerations, we consider it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information held should be withheld from disclosure under <i>Section 28 Relations with the United Kingdom</i> and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.</p> <p>Signed: Pearse McCann Date: 14 August 2025</p>			