

FOI DOF/2025-0371

Request

Can your department share minutes of meetings between the Minister and the following individuals or external organisations between 1 January 2025 and end of March 2025?

Department for Infrastructure Minister Liz Kimmins MLA, Northern Ireland Chamber - Chief Executive Officer, Suzanne Wylie and Director of Public Affairs and International Relations, Stuart Anderson. Construction Employers Federation - Chief Executive Officer, Mark Spence and Director of External Affairs, David Fry. Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations - Chief Executive Officer, Seamus Leheny.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (SoSNI), Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), Chris Quinn; NICCY, Head of Policy and Research, Alex Tennant and NICCY, Head of Legal and Investigations, Joanne McGuck

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

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Darren Jones MP

Department for Communities, Minister Gordon Lyons MLA, Department for the Economy, Permanent Secretary Ian Snowden and the Community Wealth Building Partnership (CWB). Larne CWB Partnership - Larne Enterprise Development Company Ltd, Chief Executive Officer, Ken Nelson. Larne CWB, David Hunter. North West CWB Partnership - Northwest Enterprise, Brian O'Neill and Culturlann, Derry, Siubhán Nic Amhlaoibh. Development Trusts NI - Chief Executive Officer, Charlie Fisher, Chairperson, Andy Tough, Director, Fintan McAliskey and Queen's University Belfast, Communities and Place, Dr Andrew Grounds.

Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Services, Reform and Digitalisation, Jack Chambers TD

Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) - Assistant General Secretary, Gerry Murphy; Vice-chair, Jacquie White and ICTU and UNISON, John Patrick Clayton

Gender Budgeting Project (Northern Ireland Women's Budget Group and Ulster University) - Professor Joan Ballantine; Co-ordinator, Alexandra Brennan and Ulster University, Aoife Mallan

International Brotherhood of Teamsters - General President, Sean O'Brien; General-Secretary Treasurer, Fred Zuckerman; Chief of Staff to the General President, Brian Rainville; Executive Assistant & Counsel to the General

Secretary-Treasurer, Rob Colone; Director of the Strategic Initiatives, Will Petty; General Counsel, Dave Suetholz. Aisling Events, Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon. Nick Thomas-Symonds MP

Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Vice President, Kailash Chada; Confederation of British Industry, Director, Angela McGowan; Retail NI, Chief Executive Officer, Glyn Roberts; Federation of Small Businesses, Head of Policy, Rachel McCorriston; NI Retail Consortium, Director, Neil Johnston; Hospitality Ulster, Chair, Stephen Magorrian and Manufacturing NI, Former Chair of the Board, Con O'Neill.

NI Fiscal Council - Chair, Sir Robert Chote; Maureen O'Reilly; Dr Esmond Birnie; Professor Alan Barrett

Conradh na Gaeilge - Communications Manager, Dr Pádraig Ó Tiarnaigh, Language Rights Co-ordinator, Cuisle Nic Liam and Advocacy Manager, Conchúr Ó Muadaigh

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Darren Jones MP and Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP

DoF response

I can confirm the department holds the information requested.

The information you have requested is attached in Annex B. Please note, some of the information is withheld because it is exempt under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018.

In this case, I believe disclosure would contravene the first data protection principle, which provides that personal data must be processed lawfully and fairly.

Having considered all the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test – lawful, fairness and transparency test (attached as a separate document – Annex D), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third-party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject.

Some of the information requested is being withheld as it is exempt under:

- Section 27(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 27 exempts information if its disclosure would prejudice relations between the United Kingdom and any other State, the interests of the UK abroad, or the promotion or protection by the UK of its interests abroad.

- Section 28(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 28(1) protects information the disclosure of which would prejudice relations between the administrations of the UK.
- Section 35(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 35(1)(a) is aimed at protecting the government policy-making process in order to maintain the delivery of effective government.
- Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 43 protects information which would prejudice the commercial interest of any person (including the public authority holding it).

Section 27, 28, 35 and 43 are qualified exemptions, and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours releasing or withholding this material (see public interest test at Annex C). Taking into account all the circumstances of the case, I have determined that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information.