

FOI RESPONSE ISSUED - 30 JUNE 2022

REQUEST

“ 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”

OUR RESPONSE TO THE INFORMATION REQUEST UNDER THE 2002 ACT

1. What information is held on the political affiliation of board members and senior staff within your organisation.

Information on board members, including political affiliation, is available within the SLAB Board Members' Register of Interests on the SLAB website - <https://www.slab.org.uk/corporate-information/our-people/board-members/> None of our senior staff at SLAB have declared a political affiliation.

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

Our communications team consists of two full time staff. Their duties are split between internal and external communications. It is not possible to give a concise figure for the cost of media work since dealing with the media forms just one part of the external communications work, media activity varies from month to month and it is not handled by a dedicated role. Under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 requirements we publish information on our staff costs for external communications. The latest available figure is for the year 2020-21 where the cost was stated as £58,712. A part of this external communications cost can be attributed to media work.

3. What guidelines have been issued to your organisation by the Scottish Government on press releases and media.

No general guidelines have been issued to us by the Scottish Government on press releases and media.

However, to be helpful, in February 2022, prior to the Scottish Local Government elections, guidance was issued to SLAB and other Non-Departmental Public Bodies that contained a section 'Communication activities' (copied below) related to impartiality and the Civil Servants Code.

'Excerpt from: Scottish Local Government Election Guidance 2022'

(URL: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-local-government-election-guidance-2022/>)

Communication activities

17. Communications staff should apply the principles set out in paragraphs 5 and 6 above when planning and delivering communications activities which will take place during this period. Additional care should therefore be taken in relation to press and marketing activity concerning local issues. In cases of doubt, advice should be sought from the relevant Scottish Government Communications team.

18. It is also important to take care with official websites and social media channels which will be scrutinised closely by the news media and the political parties during the local election period. In cases of doubt, guidance should be sought from Scottish Government Communications (contact: Julie Grant or, for Digital: James Coltham).'