



# MEDIA

# RELEASE

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## **Freedom of Information coverage must be brought up-to-date says Campaign**

The Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland (CFoIS) today (Monday), called for the Scottish Parliament to step in and add significant amendments to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act when it discusses a Scottish Government FOI (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill in the coming months.

**Derek Manson-Smith, Co-Convener of the CFoIS** said

"We're submitting our response to the Finance Committee's consultation, asking them to take the opportunity to rectify the growing anomaly in freedom of information. As public service delivery moves away from public authorities to all sorts of trusts, arms-length companies, voluntary groups and private contractors - so people's legal rights to ask for information about these services contract and vanish. The Government or the Committee must step in and maintain those rights."

Despite a series of consultations over extending the legislation to cover groups such as those listed by the CFoIS, the Scottish Government dropped their planned extension last November. The consultations and an opinion poll commissioned by the Scottish Information Commissioner showed wide public support for the extension.

**Carole Ewart, the other Co-Convener of the Campaign** said

"Given Government principles supporting FoI, and the level of public support for extending coverage to all public service providers, their failure to take such an obvious opportunity to extend that coverage is very damaging to our rights."

The Campaign is also approaching a wide range of Scottish organisations to back their call for the law to be extended to cover private contractors, arms-length organisations, trusts, housing associations and other bodies that increasingly deliver Scotland's public services.

**Dave Moxham, Deputy General Secretary of the STUC**, said they would be supporting the Campaign's call

"Through the Freedom of Information Amendment Bill, Scottish Government must get to grips with the unacceptable fact that organisations such as ALEOS and housing associations which provide essential services to communities and which spend billions of public money are not currently subject to the same scrutiny as directly delivered services. People's right to know should be dependent on the nature of the information they seek – not who holds it."

The Scottish Parliament Finance Committee's consultation at stage one, ends on 8 August. Members of the public are welcome to make their own views known by contacting - [finance@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:finance@scottish.parliament.uk).

The full response from the Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland is available from the Campaign contacts below.

**For further information contact:** Carole Ewart or Derek Manson-Smith Co-conveners of the CFoIS  
<http://www.cfoi.org.uk/scotland.html>.