



Freedom of Information Act 2000: Extending to Contractors and Other Organisations Exercising Public Functions **QSD on 22 July 2019**

This briefing identifies relevant reports and useful documents, including recent parliamentary materials and press articles, which may be of assistance to Members in preparing for the following debate:

Lord McNally to ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to extend the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to contractors and other organisations exercising public functions.

Copies of the materials are available for collection from the Library.

Key Information

- House of Commons Library, [Freedom of Information: Changing the Law?](#), 10 March 2016

Summary of the post-legislative scrutiny of the 2000 Act that had taken place up until early 2016.

- Cabinet Office and Independent Commission on Freedom of Information, [Independent Commission on Freedom of Information Report](#), 1 March 2016, pp 51–2

Extracts concerning proposals for the extension of the 2000 Act to cover private contractors providing public services. This fell outside the commission's terms of reference, however the commission expressed "provisional views" regarding extending the Act. These were not addressed in the [Government's response to the report](#).

- House of Commons Library, [Extending the Freedom of Information Act to Housing Associations and Public Contractors](#), 1 March 2019, pp 1–4

Summary of recent proposals for extending the scope of the 2000 Act.

- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, '[UK National Action Plan for Open Government 2019–2021](#)', 12 June 2019

Extracts from the Government's summary of its commitments regarding public access to information.

- Information Commissioner's Office, [Outsourcing Oversight? The Case for Reforming Access to Information Law](#), January 2019, pp 5–9

Executive summary and recommendations of the report outlining proposals for reform of the 2000 Act. These included extending the scope of the Act to include bodies such as housing associations.

- National Council for Voluntary Organisations, '[Freedom of Information: Time to Extend?](#)', 11 February 2019

Response to the proposals by the Information Commissioner that the 2000 Act be extended to include charities contracted by the Government to provide services.

- Andy Slaughter, '[We Must Extend FOI to Cover Private Contractors Providing Public Services](#)', PoliticsHome, 6 March 2019

Commentary from Andy Slaughter (Labour MP for Hammersmith) on the proposals in his private member's bill, the Freedom of Information (Extension) Bill.

- Frances Everitt, '[The Freedom of Information \(Extension\) Bill: Extending FOIA and EIR to Contractors](#)', Fieldfisher, 7 May 2019

Summary of the provisions in Andy Slaughter's Freedom of Information (Extension) Bill. Ms Everitt concludes that it would "significantly broaden" the current Freedom of Information regime.

Parliamentary Debate, Statements and Questions

- [Debate on 'Housing Associations and Public Contractors: Freedom of Information'](#), HC Hansard, 6 March 2019, cols 413–36WH
- A selection of written question from both Houses: [HL16719](#) (3 July 2019); [265496](#) (24 June 2019); [142762](#) (16 May 2018); [HL6165](#) (21 March 2018); and [HL1315](#) (14 September 2017)

Press Articles and Comment

- Gill Plimmer, '[UK Regulator Calls for Expansion of Freedom of Information Laws](#)'; and Elizabeth Denham, '[Close the Private Sector Gaps in the Public's Right To Know](#)', *Financial Times* (£), 27 January 2019

Further Information

- House of Commons Library, [Freedom of Information Requests](#), 8 March 2019
- UK Parliament website, '[Freedom of Information \(Extension\) Bill 2017–19](#)', accessed 15 July 2019
- Campaign for Freedom of Information and UK Open Government Civil Society Network, [Extend Freedom of Information to All Public Contractors: A Proposal for the UK's 2016–18 Open Government Partnership National Action Plan](#), March 2016

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