



## The Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland

### You are Invited

## Virtual Meeting of the Scottish Public Information Forum (SPIF) Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2 - 3.30pm

### Global to Local

SPIF is organised to celebrate International Right to Know Day<sup>1</sup> and our keynote speakers are Toby Mendel and Laura Notess from the Centre for Law and Democracy<sup>2</sup>. They will report on their COVID-19 tracker detailing the global response to 'right to know' law including in Scotland. The meeting will be part of global celebrations promoted by UNESCO. In 2020, the focus is on to the right to information in times of crisis and on the advantages of having constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information to save lives, build trust and help the formulation of sustainable policies through and beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

Participants will also hear updates from the Scottish Government, Scottish Information Commissioner, UK Information Commissioner's office and from Dr David Goldberg who will explain how the Tromso Convention will open up opportunities to access information in Scotland. The confirmed agenda for SPIF appears below.

### SPIF

The Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland organises SPIF twice a year to enable rights holders and duty bearers to meet and discuss 'access to information' in Scotland and consider how laws which force disclosure of information are operating. Learning from each other helps improve understanding and practice.

SPIF's agreed remit is to 'enable the long-term effectiveness of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FoISA) and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIR(S)s)'. Its role is incorporated in the Scottish Government's Six FoI principles published in 2007 to 'Maintain effective relationships with the Scottish Information Commissioner and other key stakeholders. We ensure the effective operation of the Act by fostering and maintaining good working relationships on Freedom of Information with stakeholders such as other public authorities and the Scottish Public Information Forum.' [The Scottish Government website](#) has more information. SPIF is an open opportunity to:

- Act as a sounding-board on the practical operation of FoISA and the EIR(S)s.
- Share experiences of FOI and the EIR (S)s
- Share good practice on FoI and EIR(S)s.

<sup>1</sup> More info about events on 28<sup>th</sup> Sept <https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/accesstoinformationday>

<sup>2</sup> More info at <http://www.law-democracy.org/live/about-us/who-we-are/>

- Hear updates from the Scottish Information Commissioner, the UK Information Commissioner's Office and from the Scottish Government.

### Who should attend?

If you work for the public sector, civil society or the private sector this meeting will be useful in your work, and members of the public are welcome to attend. Registration is free and at [Eventbrite](#)

### Confirmed Agenda

1. Welcome
  2. **Keynote speakers** Toby Mendel and Laura Notess from the Centre for Law and Democracy<sup>3</sup>, whose presentation will include a report on their COVID-19 tracker detailing the global response to RTK law including Scotland's. Questions
  3. Dr David Goldberg 'The Council of Europe's Tromso Convention', the first binding international legal instrument to recognise a general right of access to official documents held by public authorities.<sup>4</sup> Questions
- Break for 10 minutes
4. Minute and Matters arising from previous meeting
  5. Report from Scottish Information Commissioner and Questions – Daren Fitzhenry
  6. Report from UK Information Commissioner's Office - Maureen Falconer, Regional Manager and Jenny Brotchie, Senior Policy Officer for Scotland.
  7. Report from Scottish Government and Questions – Gerry Hendricks, head of the FOI unit.
  8. Update from CFoIS including on the post legislative scrutiny of FoISA, human rights and EU Continuity Bill. Questions.
  9. Reports from other participants
  10. Date of next meeting
  11. Closing and Thanks

### Thanks to FPC

This meeting of SPIF is hosted virtually by The Foreign Policy Centre (FPC), an outward-looking, non-partisan international affairs think tank. FPC's mission is to provide an open and accessible space for the ideas, knowledge and experience of experts, academics and activists from across the world, so that their voices can be heard by a global audience of citizens and decision makers in order to find solutions to today's international challenges.<sup>5</sup>

### About CFoIS

The Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland (CFoIS) was established in 1984 to improve public access to official information, to secure legal right to access information and to enforce that right. The initiative came from the Scottish Consumer Council. We believe in the right of people to find out about how they are governed and how their services are delivered. CFoIS is run by volunteers and relies on donations and funding earned through project delivery and training. For further information go to [www.cfois.scot/](http://www.cfois.scot/) [info@cfois.scot](mailto:info@cfois.scot) @CFoIScot

<sup>3</sup> More info at <http://www.law-democracy.org/live/about-us/who-we-are/>

<sup>4</sup> More info at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/205>

<sup>5</sup> More info at <https://fpc.org.uk/>