

EIR Request (received 05 April 2023) - Reference: DFI/2023-0130

I would like to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

1. Details of any and all communications/correspondence or meetings between the current Permanent Secretary Julie Harrison and Dalradian Gold, Dalradian Gold sub-contractor or agents working or representing Dalradian Gold in any capacity. From 1st April 2022
2. Details of any meetings, correspondence or lobbying to the current Permanent Secretary DFI Julie Harrison on behalf of Dalradian Gold from any elected representative of any Northern Ireland political party from local councillor, MLA to MP. From the 1st April 2022
3. Details of any meetings, correspondence or lobbying to the current Permanent Secretary DFI Julie Harrison from a Northern Ireland Minister, Ministerial secretary or SPAD from any political party lobbying on behalf of Dalradian Gold or their agents. From 1st April 2022
4. Details of any meetings, correspondence or lobbying to the current Permanent Secretary DFI Julie Harrison from a Minister or Ministerial secretary based in England, Scotland or Wales belonging to any political party lobbying on behalf of Dalradian Gold or an agent. From 1st April 2022
5. Details of any meetings/correspondence or communications regarding Dalradian Gold planning application or PAC Public Inquiry between current Permanent Secretary Julie Harrison and MLA for West Tyrone Mr Thomas Buchanan from 1st April 2022.

Response (issued 09 May 2023)

Thank you for your email date received 05 April 2023 requesting information held by this office, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) relating to the above.

In considering your request on behalf of the Department I have determined that the information requested falls under the aegis of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, as opposed to the FOI Act 2000. Section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act specifically excludes from consideration under that Act requests for what is deemed to be environmental information. Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) gives rights of public access environmental information held by public authorities.

A guide explaining the Environmental Information Regulations can be found at:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-environmental-information-regulations/what-are-the-eir/>.

In response to your request, I can confirm that the Department for Infrastructure does hold information related to your request. As EIR relates to public rights of access to information, I must consider whether information is suitable for release to the world at large, and not solely to the applicant. I have examined the information you requested and carried out a public interest test to determine whether this information is suitable for release to the public.

Following consideration of the public interest in this case, I attach all information held that is suitable for disclosure to the public. However, I have determined that some of the requested information is not suitable for release and the attached records have been redacted for the following reason.

The redacted information constitutes third party personal data within the meaning of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). A public authority may only release third party personal data if to do so would be fair, lawful and would meet the conditions in Schedule 2, 3 or 4 of the DPA. The Department may not disclose personal information to the public in contravention of any of the data protection principles (Article 5(1) General Data Protection Regulation or sections 34(1) and 85(1) DPA) and must consider all consequences of disclosure in each case. The information provided has therefore been redacted under the exception provided under EIR by Regulation 12(3) & 13: personal information. I am satisfied that the public interest is best served by withholding this information.

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