



WRITTEN QUESTION FOR SUBMISSION TO CORPORATE COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY 30 JANUARY 2024

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR FERNANDES DATE SUBMITTED: 23 JANUARY 2024

In light of the ICO's updated guidance on official information held in non-corporate communications channels¹ (2023) and the recent high-profile cases of using Whatsapp for official business² as well as the confirmation that instant messages can be subject to FOI requests, what is Moray Council's current policy on using instant messaging services for official Council business?

When was it last updated?

RESPONSE

The main documents that currently provide guidance are the Computer Use Policy, Social Media Policy and the hybrid/homeworking guidance as part of the Flexible Working Policy which makes specific reference to the use of instant messages.

However, use of instant messages within the work context is a developing area that the Council will consider how best to respond to taking account of personal and business use by work teams, security and information governance considerations and managing the workforce implications where there is potentially widespread use.

The Council's Computer Use Policy is currently under review and being updated with reference to social media and chat functionality, due to be completed within 2024/25. Following this review, communications will be issued to managers and staff to ensure awareness and understanding of the over-arching and specific responsibilities when using council devices.

¹ <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi-eir-and-access-to-information/freedom-of-information-and-environmental-information-regulations/official-information-held-in-non-corporate-communications-channels/>

² <https://news.sky.com/story/the-minutes-notes-and-whatsapp-messages-shared-during-boris-johnsons-evidence-at-the-covid-inquiry-13024082>