



Scottish Information  
Commissioner  
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# Decision Notice 169/2025

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## Whether request was vexatious

Authority: Glasgow City Council  
Case Ref: 202500741

### Summary

The Applicant asked the Authority for “the wet ink signature summary warrants” issued by Glasgow Sheriff Court. The Authority refused to comply with the request as it considered the request to be vexatious. The Commissioner investigated and found that the request was vexatious and that the Authority was not obliged to comply with it.

### Relevant statutory provisions

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) sections 1(1), (2) and (6) (General entitlement); 14(1) (Vexatious requests); 47(1) and (2) (Application for decision by Commissioner).

### Background

1. On 1 April 2025, the Applicant made a request for information to the Authority. He asked the Authority for the wet ink signature summary warrants issued by Glasgow Sheriff Court. The full text of the Applicant’s request (subject to the redaction of personal data) is reproduced in Appendix 1.
2. The Authority responded on 28 April 2025. It notified the Applicant that it was refusing to comply with his request as it considered it to be vexatious in line with section 14(1) of FOISA.
3. On the same day, the Applicant wrote to the Authority requesting a review of its decision. He stated that he was dissatisfied with the decision because he disagreed that his request was vexatious.

4. The Authority notified the Applicant of the outcome of its review on 9 May 2025, which fully upheld its original decision. It also said that it considered the Applicant's requirement for review to be vexatious.
5. On 9 May 2025, the Applicant wrote to the Commissioner, applying for a decision in terms of section 47(1) of FOISA. He stated that he was dissatisfied with the outcome of the Authority's review because he disagreed that his request was vexatious.

## Investigation

6. The Commissioner determined that the application complied with section 47(2) of FOISA and that he had the power to carry out an investigation.
7. On 2 June 2025, the Authority was notified in writing that the Applicant had made a valid application. The case was subsequently allocated to an investigating officer.
8. Section 49(3)(a) of FOISA requires the Commissioner to give public authorities an opportunity to provide comments on an application. The Authority was invited to comment on this application and to answer specific questions related to why it considered the Applicant's request to be vexatious.

## Commissioner's analysis and findings

9. The Commissioner has considered all of the submissions made to him by the Applicant and the Authority.

### ***Section 14(1) – Vexatious or repeated requests***

10. Under section 14(1) of FOISA, a Scottish public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the request is vexatious.
11. The Commissioner has published [guidance](#)<sup>1</sup> on the application of section 14(1) of FOISA. This states:

"There is no definition of "vexatious" in FOISA. The Scottish Parliament considered that the term "vexatious" was well-established in law and chose to give the Commissioner latitude to interpret the term in that context, so that the interpretation might evolve over time in light of experience and precedent."
12. In the Commissioner's view, there is no single formula or definitive set of criteria that allow a formulaic approach to be taken to determining whether a request is vexatious. Each request must be considered on the merits of the case, supported by evidence, clear evaluation and reasoning. Although this is not an exhaustive list, the following factors will be relevant to a finding that a request (which may be the latest in a series of requests or other related correspondence) is vexatious:
  - (i) It would impose a significant burden on the public authority.
  - (ii) It does not have a serious purpose or value.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.foi.scot/sites/default/files/2023-07/BriefingSection14VexatiousorRepeatedRequests.pdf>

- (iii) It is designed to cause disruption or annoyance to the public authority.
  - (iv) It would otherwise, in the opinion of a reasonable person, be considered to be manifestly unreasonable or disproportionate.
13. While the Commissioner's view is that the term "vexatious" must be applied to the request and not the requester, he also acknowledges that the applicant's identity, and the history of their dealings with a public authority, may be relevant in considering whether a request is vexatious.

*The Applicant's submissions*

14. In his application to the Commissioner, the Applicant provided submissions under the following headings in support of his position that his request was not vexatious:
- (i) Serious purpose and public interest
  - (ii) Case law support
  - (iii) Scriptural foundation
  - (iv) Fee schedule (lawful notice)
  - (v) Quantum grammar paragraph.
15. Regarding (i), the Applicant said that his request asked the Authority to confirm whether summary warrants issued in his "case" had a wet ink signature and official court stamp and to identify the natural person authorising such warrants. He considered these to be fundamental legal requirements in both administrative procedure and lawful due process. He also submitted that it was not "frivolous nor disruptive" to request proof of authenticity in legal enforcement instruments.
16. Regarding (ii), the Applicant cited four judgments from various jurisdictions. He had also referred to these judgments in his requirement for review where he said that they affirmed the following principle:
- "A corporate entity cannot lawfully issue or authenticate documents without a living natural person, capable of standing full liability, swearing an oath, and signing with a wet ink signature."
17. Regarding (iii), the Applicant quoted a Bible verse that he considered affirmed that "truth, honour and lawful conduct are not merely moral suggestions but spiritual imperatives". He said that public servants "operate in trust and must uphold truth".
18. Regarding (iv), the Applicant stated he was submitting the notice as "evidence of obstruction of a lawful request" and that he was entering a number of fees into the public record, which he said were "payable within 21 days to avoid default".
19. Regarding (v), the Applicant wrote a paragraph which, among other things, stated that:
- "With the-absence of the-wet-ink-signature and seal by a-natural-party is with the-proof of the-fraud and with the-violation of the-divine-law, contract-law, and-right-of-due-process."
20. During the investigation, the Applicant provided further submissions to the Commissioner. The Commissioner has fully considered these submissions, but he will not reproduce them in his decision notice.

21. However, the Applicant submitted that his request was “police, specific and submitted in good faith”. He denied that his request met the criteria for vexatiousness under section 14(1) of FOISA and argued that there was “no evidence of burden, harassment or improper motive”.

#### *The Authority’s submissions*

22. The Authority provided detailed submissions explaining why it considered the Applicant’s request vexatious in terms of section 14(1) of FOISA. The Commissioner will set out what he considers to be the key elements of these submissions.
23. The Authority explained that since January 2023, the Applicant had made at least fifty initial requests for information and requirements for review under FOISA, as well as a number of subject access requests. It provided evidence of these previous requests in the form of a spreadsheet but noted that it was not an “exhaustive record of all of the requests it had received from him. It stated that the Applicant had also made numerous invalid requests for information, as well as requests that were responded to on a “business-as-usual” basis.
24. The Authority noted that in some of his requests the Applicant stated that he was a “sovereign Scot” or “sovereign citizen”. It described this as an “anti-government movement” that is, among other things, opposed to the payment of Council Tax and frequently contend that they are not required to pay as they do not recognise statute law.
25. Given the number of requests for information received on this theme, including from the Applicant, the Authority explained that it had set up [a dedicated section on its website](#)<sup>2</sup> to explain that it is obliged to levy and collect Council Tax. It noted that it had referred the Applicant to this information on numerous occasions, but he continued to contact it to request the same or similar information.
26. The Authority also explained that the Applicant continually sought to conflate the Authority with GCC LLP Investments Ltd and that he addressed letters to the Authority referring to the company number of GCC LLP Investments Ltd, despite the Authority advising him of the distinction between the Authority and that company.
27. The Authority stated that Applicant had frequently indicated in his contact with it that he did not believe he was required to pay Council Tax. In support of this point, it noted that the Applicant had previously raised an action in Glasgow Sheriff Court against the Authority under section 50(1) of the Debtors (Scotland) Act 1987. In this action, the Applicant sought an order that an earnings arrestment executed on behalf of the Authority (following a summary warrant granted in favour of the Authority in respect of Council Tax arrears owed by the Applicant) was invalid or that it ceased to have effect. The Authority stated that the Sheriff overseeing the proceedings had dismissed the Applicant’s case.
28. The Authority said that the Applicant had continuously stated that the Authority was a “legal fiction” and questioned “Who or what is [the Authority] in legal and lawful terms?”. It submitted that practically all of the Applicant’s requests centred around his belief that he was not liable for Council Tax and that the summary warrant issued by Glasgow Sheriff Court (due to his Council Tax arrears) was not genuine.
29. The Authority also explained that, in July 2024, it had issued the Applicant with a letter advising him that it was taking action against him under its Unacceptable Actions Policy due to his unacceptable behaviour and unreasonable demands. It advised the Applicant that

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/5587/Why-you-require-to-pay-Council-Tax>

contact with the Authority was restricted to a single email address and that no other Authority official would respond to any further contact from him. However, it confirmed that this did not affect the Applicant's rights under FOI law.

30. In terms of its application of section 14(1) of FOISA to the Applicant's request in this case, the Authority recognised that the vexatious "test" is a high barrier to meet but it submitted that all relevant circumstances should be considered. It considered that this approach was reflected by the Court of Session in [Beggs v Scottish Information Commissioner \[2018\] CSIH 80](#)<sup>3</sup>.
31. The Authority also referred to previous decisions of the Commissioner, including:
- [Decision 099/2024](#)<sup>4</sup> (paragraph 24):  
"[T]he vexatious or manifestly unreasonable nature of a request may only emerge after considering the context created by previous or ongoing correspondence."
  - [Decision 065/2024](#)<sup>5</sup> (paragraph 20):  
"While the Commissioner's view is that the terms "vexatious" and "manifestly unreasonable" must be applied to the request and not the requester, he acknowledged that an applicant's identity, and the history of their dealings with a public authority, may be relevant in considering the nature and effect of a request and its surrounding circumstances."
32. The Authority also referred to [Decision 285/2024](#)<sup>6</sup> of the Commissioner, which related to a previous request the Applicant made to the Authority related to how much Council Tax had been paid directly "to the pension fund". It noted that the Commissioner had determined that it had been entitled to conclude that request was vexatious and it quoted the following extract of the decision:
- "While campaigning in furtherance of legitimate concerns is an appropriate activity in a democratic society, the Commissioner considers that the Applicant's campaign is not well founded, has no reasonable prospect of success and that its purpose is to pursue an argument rather than a genuine attempt to obtain information."
33. The Authority submitted that the Applicant's requests had not deviated from the pattern identified previously and provided to the Commissioner as part of his investigation in Decision 285/2024.
34. In summary, the Authority concluded that, when the Applicant's history of dealings with the Authority was considered, his request in this case was clearly vexatious in terms of section 14(1) of FOISA. It submitted the Applicant was seeking to disrupt and harass the Authority, that he was misusing FOI law to further his inaccurate position that he was not legally obligated to pay Council Tax and that his request in this case was not a genuine attempt to obtain information.

#### *The Commissioner's view*

35. The Commissioner has taken account of all of the relevant submissions provided by both the Applicant and the Authority.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.bailii.org/scot/cases/ScotCS/2018/%5b2018%5d\\_CSIH\\_80.html](https://www.bailii.org/scot/cases/ScotCS/2018/%5b2018%5d_CSIH_80.html)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.foi.scot/decision-0992024>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.foi.scot/decision-0652024>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.foi.scot/decision-2852024>

36. As rehearsed earlier, the vexatious nature of a request may only emerge after considering it in the context created by previous correspondence. The Commissioner is satisfied, having reviewed the submissions provided, that it was reasonable for the Authority to consider the Applicant's history of dealings with it when deciding whether the request in question should be treated as vexatious.
37. Given the history and nature of the Applicant's dealings with the Authority (as set out in the Authority's submissions), the Commissioner is also satisfied that the Authority was entitled to conclude that the request in question was vexatious.
38. Specifically, the Commissioner is satisfied that the Applicant has an ongoing grievance with the Authority in relation to the legality of the Council Tax levy which extends to disputing the legality of the summary warrant issued by Glasgow Sheriff Court in respect of his Council Tax arrears.
39. While campaigning in furtherance of legitimate concerns is an appropriate activity in a democratic society, the Commissioner considers that the Applicant's campaign is not well founded, has no reasonable prospect of success and that its purpose is to pursue an argument rather than a genuine attempt to obtain information.
40. In this case, having considered all relevant submissions, the Commissioner is satisfied that the Authority was entitled to refuse to comply with the request by virtue of section 14(1) of FOISA.
41. The Commissioner would like to make clear that his finding in this decision does not mean that any request from the Applicant to the Authority would necessarily be vexatious. In this case, the Commissioner is satisfied that the Authority was entitled to refuse to comply with the request in question by virtue of section 14(1) of FOISA, considering the submissions provided by the Authority and bearing in mind that the request in question was clearly linked by subject matter to previous requests made by, and correspondence received from, the Applicant.
42. However, the right to request information is an important legal right. It should not be abused, but the provisions within section 14(1) of FOISA must still be used carefully, which means authorities must always consider requests on their own merits and consider all the relevant circumstances, in order to reach a balanced conclusion as to whether a request is vexatious.

## **Decision**

The Commissioner finds that the Authority complied with Part 1 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 in responding to the information request made by the Applicant.

## **Appeal**

Should either the Applicant or the Authority wish to appeal against this decision, they have the right to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only. Any such appeal must be made within 42 days after the date of intimation of this decision.

**David Hamilton  
Scottish Information Commissioner**

**7 July 2025**

## Appendix 1: Information request

"I [redacted] Require the wet ink signature summary warrants issued by Glasgow sheriff court

No wet ink signature or court stamp then the documents you have are unlawful void ab initio

If a **summary warrant** only has a printed name and lacks a court stamp or a wet ink signature, this could potentially raise serious concerns about its validity. In general, for a summary warrant to be valid under Scottish law, it must meet certain formalities, which typically include:

1. **Signature**: A summary warrant should be signed by the sheriff or the appropriate court official. A printed name may not be sufficient to fulfill the legal requirements, as it lacks the personal endorsement of the official who has authorized the warrant. The absence of a wet ink signature could lead to questions about the authenticity and authority of the document.
2. **Court Stamp**: The warrant generally requires an official court stamp to signify that it has been formally issued by the court. Without this, there might be an issue with proving that the warrant was genuinely issued by the court.
3. **Delivery**: The document should be delivered to the relevant party to ensure they are aware of the warrant.

If these formalities are not followed, the summary warrant could be deemed **invalid** or **void ab initio** (from the outset), as it may not meet the legal requirements set out in the legislation. However, whether the document is void depends on the specific circumstances and the interpretation of the courts. In practice, courts might look at whether the person against whom the warrant is issued was given adequate notice or if they were prejudiced by the defect.

If you believe that a summary warrant is invalid due to missing signatures or stamps, it is advisable to seek legal advice. A solicitor could review the case and help determine if the warrant can be challenged in court.

I ask you seek legal advice

Administrative legislation is not law

Without prejudice vexation ill will or frivolity

[redacted]"