



One thing's for sure, journalists from The Guardian won't be clamouring to our shores if the [Freedom of information Bill 2014](#) is made law here.

That's because only residents of the Isle of Man will have a statutory right to access information held by public authorities. And then locals may only be allowed the information if it was created after the 11th October 2011.

Before that date a request can be made under the existing Code of Practice on Access to Government Information, but there is no statutory right to such information, unlike the [proposed legislation](#)

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A cornerstone of FOI legislation is known as the public interest test. It starts with the premise that there is a general public interest in disclosure and that there is no general public interest in non disclosure.

The consultation document provides a list of absolutely exempt information and also a list of qualified exempt information. The public interest test is important in the latter category because it defines how public authorities will interpret any request. This important principle is not spelt out.

PAG will be taking a close look at the Bill as drafted and intends to write a detailed response to the [consultation](#) .

We urge everyone who feels able to similarly write a response however brief. This Bill is important in order to achieve an healthy democracy in the Isle of Man.

Freedom of Information Bill 2014 - Initial impression "A typical Manx Whum"

Written by PAG

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Editors note: *Whum* - muddle or confusion. Mainly used down south.