

FOIWorks

Service Definition

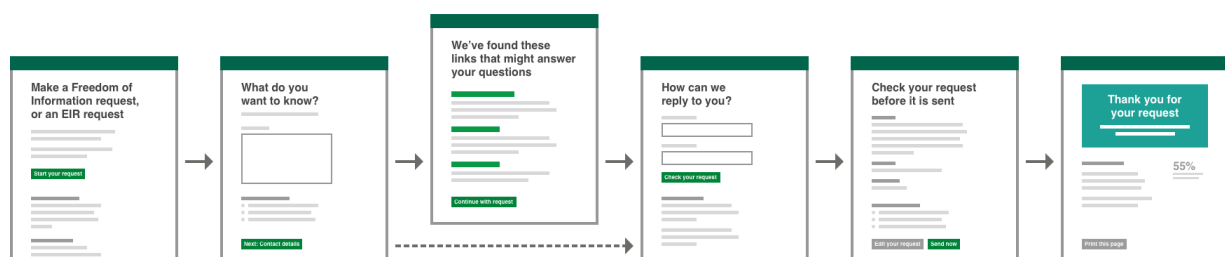
An open source, front end Freedom of Information request service developed in collaboration with local authorities, for local authorities.

In 2018, as part of research carried out by our parent charity mySociety, we worked in partnership with Hackney Council, Cornwall Council, Suffolk County Council, Stevenage Borough Council and East Herts District Council to understand the challenges faced by information officers, and the untapped value in channel-shifting more FOI requests into a fully integrated, automated solution. The result of this research was FOIWorks.

FOIWorks improves the quality of FOI requests by providing a user-centred request process that intelligently leverages already published information. Built around the needs of both citizens and information officers, the solution streamlines authorities' FOI workflows and reduces the amount of correspondence per request - or in some cases removes the need for the request to be made at all.

Like all of our solutions, we can integrate FOIWorks with your existing backend management system(s) – we have an established integration with the Infreemation and iCasework FOI case management systems, and can work with you to integrate with other similar systems.

FOIWorks is built upon 18 years of experience running open source FOI software, including WhatDoTheyKnow, which has now processed over 1.2 million requests, and Alaveteli, which is currently used in more than 25 jurisdictions around the world, translated into more than 20 languages. Alaveteli is also used by Access Info Europe to power the Ask the EU service, which processes requests for any of the European Union bodies.



Benefits for citizens

Simple process

No complicated forms, no unnecessary questions. We ask only for the requester's information request, name, and email address.

Easy tracking

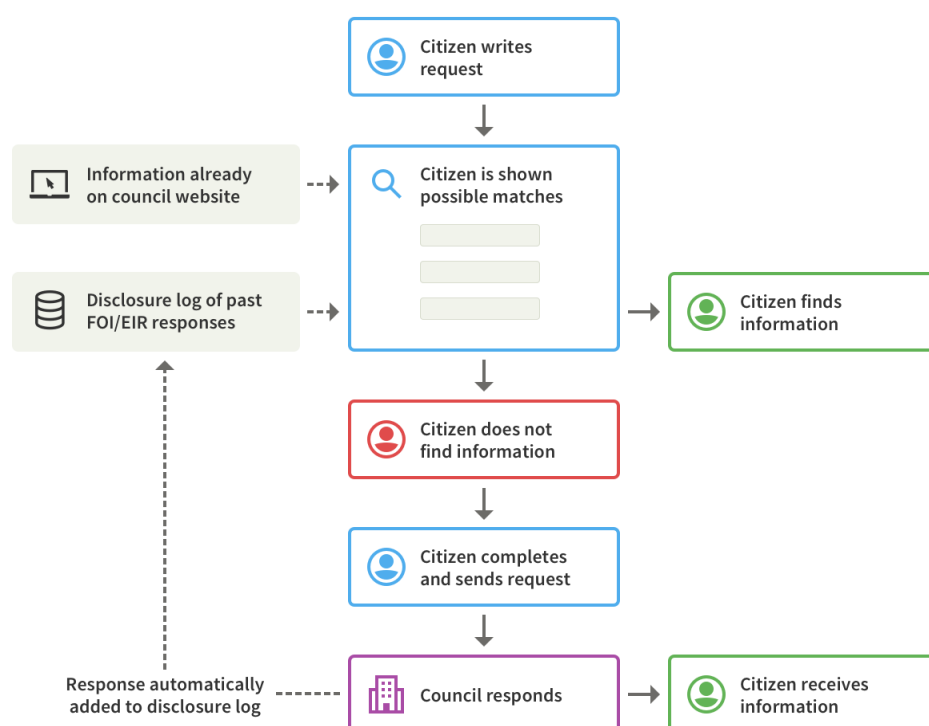
Requesters receive a reference number and confirmation email from the integrated case management system.

Faster responses where possible

We match the request against pre-existing content and the disclosure log, so the citizen doesn't have to wait for a response if their question has already been answered.

Increases trust

By making it easy to request information and signposting to existing, relevant information, FOIWorks helps you to increase trust and transparency.



Benefits for councils

Streamlines processes

FOI requests are sent straight through to your case management system, like iCasework or Infreemation. No manual copying and pasting.

Reduces duplicates

The suggestion system helps redirect citizens to existing material before they make a request.

Harnesses value of existing responses

Relevant answers to FOI requests already published to your Disclosure Log are automatically suggested as potential resolutions at the point of request.

Better quality requests

Divert poorly-grounded requests before they are submitted by including helpful information in the request workflow to help citizens make good quality, actionable requests.

Continual development

Under continual development in consultation with clients and users, through research and discovery events.

Helps you preempt requests

Links to existing information (such as pages on the council website) can also be curated by Information Officers to feed suggestions - even for information that hasn't yet been requested!

Increases trust

Whether their question is answered automatically through the suggestion engine or not, citizens have a good experience, increasing trust that the authority has nothing to hide.

Open standards compliant

Proudly Open Source software, following the Government Digital Service Standard.

Features

Simple, intuitive interface

No complicated forms, no unnecessary questions. FOIWorks is designed to remove barriers to requests by only asking for the request, and the name and email address of the requester.

Reference number

Once the request has been submitted, the citizen receives a reference number and confirmation email from the integrated case management system.

Curate information and links

Upload links to existing published information in your disclosure log or website pages to feed the suggestion engine and preempt responses.

Advice to requesters

Help citizens form successful requests, which in turn helps to reduce the administration per request.

Integration

End-to-end integration with your case management system (e.g. iCasework or Infreemation) sends requests straight to where you need them. Integrate with your disclosure log too for maximum benefit.

Intelligent suggestions

Match the request to existing, relevant responses from the disclosure log and custom links to help reduce time wasted on Section 21 "information already available" responses.

Built-in disclosure log

An optional extra, enabling you to keep a public record of responses to requests, from which FOIWorks can detect duplicate requests.

Built-in analytics

Instantly see which suggestions are most popular, and which are helping to direct citizens to existing information.

Accessible

Optimised to work smoothly on any device and WCAG 2.2 AA compliant, making it as simple to use as possible for everyone.

GDPR & Security

Fully compliant [data protection & privacy](#).

See our website for our [Business Continuity and security policies](#).

Getting started

Once you're signed up, we'll contact you to arrange a project kick off call where you'll be introduced to your dedicated project team. During this meeting we'll run through a project overview and what is to be delivered, discuss how we will work together, and outline what we will need from you to get things started, which will include:

- Access to the systems you want to integrate with and related documentation
- Any licensed fonts and preferred logos so that the site aligns with your branding on your existing website
- Your site configuration preferences, including any assets you want displayed

The project kick-off call will be closely followed by a scoping session during which we will ensure stakeholders understand the core functionality of FOIWorks and agree on what is in scope for delivery and whether the rollout needs to be phased.

Training

SocietyWorks provides online training sessions as part of any FOIWorks project to ensure a successful launch of the service and promote good FOI practice. These sessions are also recorded for future use.

Support and maintenance

Following training, your staff will have the tools to easily provide first line support to users in the knowledge that our SocietyWorks client support team are on hand to answer any questions and fix any technical issues.

Except in the event of emergency maintenance, SocietyWorks will give notice to the customer at least 48 hours prior to any planned system downtime, which will normally be expected to take no more than three hours to perform. The service is load-balanced for resilience, reducing the likelihood of any disruptive maintenance. The status of FOIWorks and any third party integrations can be monitored live by looking here: <https://status.societyworks.org/>

Please see our terms and conditions for more information.

Ending the contract

The contract's start date, notice and extension periods will be agreed in the Order Form. At the termination of the agreement the customer may choose to issue a transfer request which grants sufficient data and rights to operate the service yourself or with a third party. See terms and conditions for more information.