

250306 (153) FOI Support

From: [Freedom of Information](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [Freedom of Information](#)
Subject: Freedom of Information Request
Date: 06 March 2025 11:36:00
Attachments: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your freedom of information request of 27 January 2025 and the clarification received on 18 February 2025. We are responding to you under the Freedom of Information(Scotland) Act 2002.

FOI REQUEST (27 January 2025)

Funding Support

1. How many businesses have received funding support since SOSE was established?
2. How many businesses or individuals have been refused support since SOSE's establishment, broken down by:
 - a. The reasons for which the support was refused.
 - b. The type of support requested.
 - c. The year in which the support was refused.

Business Longevity and Survival Rates

3. How many businesses that received any form of support from SOSE subsequently survived for more than one year? Please provide this data broken down by:
 - a. The year in which the support was given.
 - b. The number of subsequent years the businesses survived.
4. How many businesses that received funding support from SOSE subsequently survived for more than one year? Please provide this data broken down as above (year of support and subsequent survival years).

Employment Impact

5. What is the average number of people employed by businesses that received:
 - a. Any form of support from SOSE, broken down by the year the support was received.
 - b. Financial support from SOSE, broken down by the year the support was received.

Staffing Costs

6. What is the total amount of money spent on staffing costs by SOSE, broken down by year?
7. Why did staff costs as a percentage of SOSE's total budget increase by 67.2% between 2021-22 and 2022-23, despite staff numbers increasing by only 26.9% in the same period?

Start-Up Support

8. How many start-ups received support from SOSE in its first year of operation? Of those start-ups:
 - a. How many are still operational today, both in absolute terms and as a percentage?
 - b. How many employees do these start-ups currently have? Please provide the data either by exact numbers or grouped in ranges (e.g., 1-10, 11-20, etc.).

Pathways Scheme

9. How many people received support through the Pathways scheme before July 2024, who had not begun trading at the time the support was received? Of those, how many subsequently began trading before the present date (excluding individuals who received support after July 2024)?

10. How many people who received support through the Pathways scheme identified as being members of an under-represented group?
11. How does SOSE define “under-represented group,” and what specific groups are included under this definition?

Repeat Support

12. How many businesses have received support from SOSE on more than one occasion? Please provide this data broken down by:
 - a. The number of times support was received.
 - b. The type(s) of support received on the first occasion.
 - c. The average number of employees at businesses receiving support, broken down by the number of times support was received.
 - d. The year in which the first instance of support was provided.

Remote Working

13. How many SOSE employees currently work from home at least one day per week? Please provide a breakdown by:
 - a. The number of days worked from home each week.
 - b. The total number of current SOSE employees.

CLARIFICATION (Received 18 February 2025)

Request

Q2. When you refer to ‘refused support’ do you mean financial support that was not progressed?

Q8. When you refer to ‘support’ do you mean financial support?

Q9. Q10. Q11. Are you referring to the SOSE Pathways Pilot which launched in September 2024, if so we would not have any data from before July 2024.

Q12. When you refer to ‘support’ do you mean financial support?

Response

Q2. When we refer to “refused support,” we are specifically asking about cases where businesses or individuals applied for direct financial assistance—such as grants, loans, or similar funding—and had their applications not progressed or were denied.

Q8. In this instance, “support” is intended to mean direct financial assistance provided to start-up businesses during their first year of operation. We are seeking data on the number of start-ups that received such financial assistance.

Q9. To ensure clarity, our request relates specifically to any support provided through the Pathways scheme before July 2024. Given your reference to the SOSE Pathways Pilot launching in September 2024, can you confirm whether there was any iteration of the Pathways scheme in operation prior to this date? If no such scheme existed before September 2024, we understand that there would be no relevant data available for question 9.

Q10. This question refers to the Pathways Pilot which SOSE launched in September 2024.

Q11. This question refers to the Pathways Pilot which SOSE launched in September 2024.

Q12. “support” refers solely to instances of financial assistance. We would like to know how many businesses have received direct financial support on more than one occasion.

FOI RESPONSE

QUESTION 1(Funding Support)

Information on the number of businesses SOSE has supported is available in each of our Annual Report and Accounts which can be found on our [website](#). The information includes both financial support and expert support.

QUESTION 2 a, b, c (Funding Support)

SOSE does not hold the information requested therefore we apply section 17 of FOISA to advise you that we do not currently hold the information you have requested.

Support is delivered in many forms such as advice, information and signposting to appropriate partners/agencies and/or funding streams. Data requested is not systematically captured. Funding support processes ensure support and due diligence from speculative enquiry to project approval. Reasons for projects being withdrawn can be varied due to the unique nature of each activity. This may include aspects such as Client decided not to progress project, Client unable to secure match funding, Client did not have capacity to proceed, or Planning Permission not granted.

QUESTION 3 and 4 (Business Longevity and Survival Rates)

SOSE does not hold the information requested therefore we apply section 17 of FOISA to advise you that we do not currently hold the information you have requested.

SOSE undertakes robust due diligence prior to awarding grants via its stringent appraisal and approval process. As per the Terms and Conditions of SOSE's Grant Offer Letter; the "Period of Obligation means the period referred to in the Offer or, where no period is set out, the period commencing on the date which you signed the Offer and ending on the anticipated Project completion date. Hence, once the grant is fully drawn down with relevant drawdown criteria and related evidence of the grant having been fully met, SOSE would not routinely check or record if businesses had ceased trading thereafter.

QUESTION 5 (Employment Impact)

SOSE does not hold the information requested therefore we apply section 17 of FOISA to advise you that we do not currently hold the information you have requested.

Business headcount data is not systematically captured. Information regarding jobs created, safeguarded and transitioned from client-facing, approved funded projects are reported in our Annual Reports and Accounts available on the SOSE [website](#). Local Authority Profiles, which shows the breakdown of business size by region and nationally is available via the Nomis [website](#).

QUESTION 6 (Staffing costs)

Information on SOSE staffing costs is available in our Annual Report and Accounts which can be found on our [website](#).

QUESTION 7 (Staffing Costs)

The year 2021/22 marked the second year of SOSE and a period of staff growth, continuing staff growth from 2020/21 (year 1) and extending into 2022/23 (year 3). The increase in

staff costs is attributed to the fact that not all employees were on board for the entire year, resulting in the full annual cost being realised in 2022/23.

QUESTION 8 (Start-up Support)

SOSE did not provide financial support to any start-ups during its first year of operation.

QUESTION 9 (Pathways)

SOSE Pathways Pilot launched in September 2024 therefore we do not have any relevant data from prior to July 2024.

SOSE has had internal regional coaches supporting Women and Young People at their pre business start-up phase since 2022, this is a SOSE objective and wasn't connected to the pathways scheme.

QUESTION 10 (Pathways)

267 clients (100%) accessing coaching support through the pathways pilot have identified as being members of an under-represented group.

QUESTION 11 (Pathways)

We were advised by our legal consultants that this should be a self-declaration by the client, when they complete the SOSE website contact form

<https://www.southofscotlandenterprise.com/pathways> - 'I believe I belong to an under-represented group' with a 'yes' or 'no' option.

QUESTION 12 (Repeat Support)

SOSE does not hold the information requested therefore we apply section 17 of FOISA to advise you that we do not currently hold the information you have requested.

Information on all SOSE grant awards (by quarter) is available on the [SOSE Website](#).

QUESTION 13 (Remote Working)

- a. SOSE does not hold the information requested therefore we apply section 17 of FOISA to advise you that we do not currently hold the information you have requested.

Our current working model expects colleagues to spend at least half their working week in our hubs or out and about across our region, meeting clients and engaging with stakeholders and colleagues in person. Due to the agile and flexible nature of our ways of working, we are unable to provide an exact breakdown of the number of days worked from home each week.

We don't have a specific record of how many days employees work from home, as our system primarily logs office attendance and doesn't account for client visits or other out-of-office engagements.

- b. SOSE currently has 145 employees.

You have the right to request a review of the way in which this request has been processed. Should you wish to exercise this right, you will need to contact us within 40

working days of receipt of this email.

If you remain dissatisfied on completion of the review, you have the right to appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner and thereafter to the Court of Session on a point of law only:

Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle
Doubledykes Road
St Andrews
Fife
KY16 9DS
Telephone: 01334 464610

www.foi.scot

or for online appeals:

www.foi.scot/appeal

Regards,
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