Guidance for collating information for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests

FOI requests:
- There is a 20 working day turnaround time for SQA to respond to any FOI requests.
- Each FOI will have an individual reference number eg FOI160.
- A Case Manager is appointed for each FOI.
- The Head of the Chief Executive's Office will generally be the Case Manager for all FOIs that come into the Corporate Office and in his absence the Case Manager will be the Executive Manager.
- The Case Manager will request correspondence that is relevant to the subject matter of the FOI request from Corporate Office team members.
- Correspondence relating to the subject matter of an FOI may take the form of email and letter correspondence (with any accompanying attachments).
- Corporate Office team members will be asked to search mailboxes and files for any relevant correspondence and then pull all together this correspondence into a Word document for their Director/CEO.
- The Case Manager will pull together all the correspondence from individual team members and include a summary of attachments in table format.
- The Case Manager will redact any irrelevant information within the correspondence he receives.
- Information may be redacted because:
    - the information is confidential;
    - deemed to be a free and frank exchange;
    - the information has been provided already;
    - the information is already in the public domain.

Folder for FOIs is on the Corporate Office network drive
FOI requests will either be saved in:
1. 'Open' subfolder
   or
2. 'Closed' subfolder

The Case Manager is the person with responsibility for moving FOIs from the 'Open' subfolder to the 'Closed' subfolder once he is content the FOIs have been closed off.

How to pull together correspondence for the Case Manager
- All relevant emails and letters for each FOI need to be saved into a Word document.
- Create new subfolder within 'Open' subfolder with the name of your Director.
- Create new Word document and name it in the following format:
  FOI### INITIALS in the Director's subfolder.
- To save an email into a Word document you need to press the reply key, then copy all the text in the email and then paste the text into the Word document.
- Add in a comment if there's an attachment to an email or letter.
- Create a new page for each new item in a document (hold down ctrl & return keys together).
- Order items in date order from oldest to newest.
- Save Word document and add in '- complete' to the file name once you've saved all the items you've found.
- Rename folder to 'DIRECTOR NAME – complete' or 'DIRECTOR NAME – nil return' (if you can't find any relevant correspondence for an FOI request).

Logging searches
Log a record of approach taken to searches for each FOI on the spreadsheet that is available in individual folders or on SharePoint – type a note on the spreadsheet of the search terms you have been using to pull together information. Logging information on the spreadsheet ensures that if we are ever questioned on our approach to FOIs we have a record of what action has been taken.