

Public

Ref: FOI/25/083

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Dear requester

Request for Information

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 23 July 2025.

Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR).

Request

You asked us:

I am writing to request detailed information regarding curtailment costs, direct payments, and energy constraints for onshore and offshore renewable wind farms in Scotland. Specifically, I would be grateful if you could provide the following data:

Curtailment Costs

- 1. What are the total curtailment costs for onshore & offshore renewable wind farms: - For each year from 2014 to 2023 inclusive*
- 2. What are the curtailment costs for each individual onshore & offshore renewable wind farm: - For each year from 2014 to 2023 inclusive*

Direct Payments to Wind Farms

- 1. What is the total amount in direct payments to onshore and offshore renewable wind farms: - For each year from 2014 to 2023 inclusive*
- 2. What is the amount paid in direct payments to each individual onshore and offshore renewable wind farm: -For each year from 2014 to 2023 inclusive*

Volume of energy curtailed

- 1. What is the total volume of energy curtailed for onshore and offshore renewable energy wind farms: -For each year from 2014 to 2023 inclusive*
- 2. What is the volume of energy curtailed for each individual onshore and offshore renewable energy wind farm: -For each year from 2014 to 2023 inclusive*
- 3. For each year from 2014 to 2023 inclusive what percentage of production time has each individual onshore and offshore wind farm been under constraint?*

Our response

Unfortunately, we are unable to progress your request any further without clarification as we are unclear what specific information you are seeking.

We would interpret 'direct payments' to be direct payments made by NESO to wind generators (known as 'constraint payments'). However, there appears to be some overlap/duplication in the first and second parts of your request.

We have provided some advice and assistance below to help you to clarify your request and about where you can find relevant data in the public domain.

Regulation 12(4)(c) of the EIR allows for a public authority to refuse a request where it is formulated in too general a manner. This exception applies where a request is unclear or open to more than one interpretation and the public authority has provided advice and assistance to help the requester to provide clarification.

The Regulation 12(4)(c) exception is subject to the public interest test in the EIR. However, the Information Commissioner recognises that it is difficult to conduct a public interest test when a public authority is unsure about what the applicant is after. The Commissioner therefore takes the position that the public interest in maintaining the exception will outweigh the public interest in disclosing what may be the wrong information.

Advice and assistance

1. Information on direct payments to wind generators are currently available on the Elexon data portal. These are the action costs for each individual Balancing Mechanism Unit (BMU). BMUs are used as units of trade within the Balancing Mechanism.

You would therefore be able to extract and process this information directly from Elexon:

<https://bmrs.elexon.co.uk/api-documentation/endpoint/balancing/acceptances>.

Information held on Elexon has been reviewed, checked and verified, and can be accessed freely and at any time, enabling you to interrogate the data without submitting an information request.

We don't settle payments at wind farm level or have any interest as such in the technology type, e.g. whether it is solar, onshore/offshore wind, therefore the data is not at this level in our systems.

2. We hold information on the system cost for those actions. System costs would include direct payments to wind generators, but also the energy replacement. We are currently assessing the best way to report this data externally.

This information is held for all BMUs by half-hourly settlement period. As you requested information for each month of 2024 and each available month of 2025 it would take some time to extract the relevant data for Scottish wind BMUs for this period.

Under Section 12 of the FOIA, public authorities are able to aggregate two or more separate requests for the purpose of estimating the costs of complying with those requests. Under the EIR there is no specific provision for the aggregation 'of substantially similar' requests. However, the Information Commissioner takes the view that it is permissible to consider a number of EIR requests together when deciding if they are manifestly unreasonable because of cost or burden. You may therefore wish to consider carefully the scope of any clarified requests you submit. Please let us know if you require further guidance about this point.

3. Wind curtailment volumes are also accessible from Elexon datasets. These not only include the action cost but also the volume associated with the action. From here, it is possible to determine the bid volumes accepted on Scottish BMUs.

You may also be interested in the Monthly Balancing Services Summary (MBSS) which includes a breakdown of constraints costs by fuel type. The published MBSS reports, by month for the current year and annually for previous financial years, are available from the 'MBSS' and 'MBSS archive' tabs at the bottom of this page: [Balancing costs | National Energy System Operator](#).

For information

The Balancing and Settlement Code (BSC) is a multi-party legal framework that underpins the electricity trading arrangements in Great Britain. Information related to the BSC is available here: [About Balancing and Settlement Code \(BSC\) - Elexon BSC](#). And a guide to Electricity Trading Arrangements is available here: [The Electricity Trading Arrangements A Beginner's Guide - Elexon Digital BSC](#).

[Elexon](#) administers the BSC on behalf of the industry and holds all data related to its administration. This enables them to compare how much electricity generators said they would produce, and suppliers said they would sell, with the actual volumes, allowing calculation of the price for these differences. Elexon makes sure that generators and suppliers either pay, or are paid, to settle any differences. This data is made publicly available through the Elexon website.

Next steps

When a public authority requests clarification on a request for information there is no further obligation to respond to that request until clarification is provided. Once we have received clarification we will respond as soon as possible and within 20-working days of receiving that clarification. If we do not receive clarification within 40-working days, we will close your request.

If you are dissatisfied with our handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. If you want us to carry out a review, please let us know within 40 working days and quote the reference number at the top of this letter. You can find our procedure here: [Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations | National Energy System Operator](#). The ICO's website also provides guidance on the internal review process: [What to do if you are dissatisfied with the response | ICO](#).

If you are still dissatisfied after our internal review, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). You should make complaints to the ICO within six weeks of receiving the outcome of an internal review. The easiest way to lodge a complaint is through their website: www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints. Alternatively, they can be contacted at: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF.

Thank you for your interest in the work of the National Energy System Operator (NESO).

Regards,

The Information Rights Team, National Energy System Operator (NESO)