



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Lobbying Register | Clàr-coiteachaidh

Annual Report | 2023

Aithisg Bhliadhnail

parliament.scot

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Foreword



This year marked a key milestone, with the fifth anniversary of the commencement of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. It is my pleasure to present to you this year's Annual Report.

You may already be aware of improvements and modifications made to the Register this year. We hope that all users of the site find these changes beneficial and an enhancement to the user experience.

This year's report provides a particular focus on the importance of ongoing compliance. We are asking registered organisations to help improve overall performance rates, by reducing the number of information returns and nil returns being submitted, or re-submitted, after the required deadlines. The changes introduced to the site, such as the new organisation dashboard, will help you to better track your deadlines, activities and clear up any issues highlighted by our team here, on time.

Part of this drive to improve performance is also the issuing of a statement letter to every Chief Executive of a registered organisation, a key audit process which is underway. Each letter provides information on the completed activities, compliance performance and any unresolved actions of an organisation which need attention. With your input and efforts, coupled as always with the excellent support given by our Lobbying Register Team, I hope that next year's report will provide me the opportunity to highlight significant compliance improvements.

David McGill

David McGill
Clerk/Chief Executive
The Scottish Parliament

Facal-tòiseachaidh



Am-bliadhna chomharraich sinn clach-mhìle chudromach leis a' chòigeamh ceann-bliadhna bho thòisich Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Tha e na thoileachas dhomh Aithisg Bhliadhnail na bliadhna-sa a thaisbeanadh dhuibh.

Is dòcha gun do mhothaich sibh na leasachaidhean agus atharrachaidhean a chaidh a dhèanamh air a' Chlàr am-bliadhna. Tha sinn an dòchas gum bi na h-atharrachaidhean sin buannachdail do luchd-cleachdaidh uile na làraich agus gun dèan iad cùisean nas fheàrr dhaibh.

Tha aithisg na bliadhna sa a' cuimseachadh gu sònraichte air cho cudromach 's a tha gèilleadh. Tha sinn ag iarraidh air buidhnean clàraichte cuideachadh le dèanadas a leasachadh san fharsaingeachd le bhith a' lughdachadh na h-àireimh de thoraidhean fiosrachaidh agus toraidhean neoni gan cur a-steach, no gan ath-chur a-steach, às dèidh a' cheann-ama riatanaich.

Bidh na h-atharrachaidhean don làraich, leithid deas-bhòrd ùr, a' cuideachadh dhaoine le bhith a' cumail sùil nas fheàrr air cinn-latha agus na gnìomhan aca, agus fuasgladh fhaighinn air cùisean sam bith a thogas an sgioba againn an seo, ann an deagh àm.

Is e pàirt den iomairt leasachaidh seo cuideachd a bhith a' cur a-mach litir aithris gu Ceannard gach buidhne chlàraichte, pròiseas sgrùdaidh cudromach a tha air tòiseachadh mar-thà. Tha gach litir a' toirt seachad fiosrachadh mu na gnìomhan a tha a' bhuidheann air crìochnachadh, ìrean gèillidh agus gnìomhan sam bith a dh'fheumas dèiligeadh riutha. Leis na h-oidhirpean agaibh, agus an taic air leth bhon Sgioba Clàr Coiteachaidh againn, tha mi an dòchas gun seall aithisg na h-ath-bhliadhna leasachaidhean mòra ann an gèilleadh.

David McGill

David McGill
Clàrc/Ceannard
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba



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Lobbying Register | Clàr-coiteachaidh

Key facts

Prìomh fhiosrachadh

Key facts

The Lobbying Register launched on 12 March 2018 and was **five years old** during this reporting year.

Over **28,000** information returns have been published and over **1,400 organisations** have been registered.

Registrations (12 June 2023)

1,462 organisations registered on the Lobbying Register since its inception.

1,297 currently active registrants.

81 new active organisations added this year

44 registrants made inactive (by request).

3 new voluntary registrants added this year.

The Health and Social Care sector has the largest number of registrants (**181**, or **14%**).

The Media, Press and Advertising sector has the lowest number of registrants (**6**, or **0.5%**).

Information Returns (12 June 2023)

21,870 substantive information returns published, an increase of 5,210 from last year.

6,223 nil returns published, an increase of 1,301 from last year.

The Health and Social Care sector has the largest number of substantive information returns published to date (**4,122** or **19%**).

The Media, Press and Advertising sector has the lowest number of substantive information returns published in any one sector (**96**, or **0.4%**).

Compliance

705 breaches (where a registrant fails to submit an information return by its 6-month deadline).



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Updates

Ùrachaidhean

Updates

Parliamentary review

The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee (SPPA) future workplans sets out “The Committee will consider the implementation of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act and any further changes to the legislation”.

At the Committee’s meeting on 23 March 2023, it considered the evaluation of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016 and agreed that the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) should undertake part of an evaluation study. Subsequently two surveys were undertaken concurrently by SPICe.

The first was a Registered Organisations Survey looking at the administrative resource for registered organisations making returns on the Lobbying Register. The second was a Lobbying Register Visitors Survey, aimed at any visitor to the Lobbying Register website, also up until 30 June.

Responses to both surveys were required by 30 June. The responses will be analysed and summarised by SPICe and shared in a report to the Committee in Autumn-Winter 2023.

Looking ahead, in terms of matters which can only be altered by revised legislation, these issues are properly for members of the Parliament to consider and then decide upon. Such areas would include any consideration and decisions relating to:

- revising, adding to, or removing any existing exemptions in the Act
- whether the Act should be extended to include other forms of communication
- whether additional levels of the civil service should be added to the Act’s scope
- a shortening of the reporting timetable, from the current six-month statutory period.

However, as detailed in last year's annual report, the following practical areas have already been suggested as matters where legislative change could help with the efficiency of running the Register and in removing some unnecessary bureaucracy for registrants:

Harmonising reporting deadlines

This would replace the current legislative position where organisations all have different dates, depending on when the organisation registered or first lobbied. This change could provide a clearer pattern for all organisations and lead to some administrative savings, particularly so if the number of deadlines of two per annum were to be increased (e.g., the legislation in Ireland has 3 deadlines per annum). This position was outlined by the Lobbying Registrar in evidence during the Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny Committee (PAPLS) parliamentary review.

Registration information

Another suggestion made during that review process from the Lobbying Register Team was to make added provision through revised legislation for a few extra items of registration information, to make contact details and organisational responsibility clearer on the Register.

Multiple returns

The current legislation determines that a return must be provided for “each instance” (Section 6(2)) of regulated lobbying. This can result in multiple returns being submitted with identical texts, for example where an organisation spends a whole day at an exhibition stand in Parliament or at a party conference, where many MSPs are present and lobbied on the same issue(s). In those circumstances, moving to a ‘one return’ approach would see no change to the lobbying outcomes being listed. It would however remove a time-consuming and frustrating process of having to provide scores of individual returns, where one could be sufficient.

Video conference - Act clarification

A tidying up legislative measure, as covered specifically in the PAPLS report, to provide further clarity.

Outreach

The Lobbying Register Team is currently developing materials for running regular online sessions, for anyone involved in the process of submitting information returns to the Register.

These sessions, expected to start in Autumn, will cover existing good practice for writing returns, guidance on exemptions within the Act and essential advice on compliance requirements.

You can contact the Lobbying Register Team at lobbying@parliament.scot if you would like to register your interest in attending one of these sessions.

European Lobbying Registrars' Network (ELRN)

We were delighted to host this annual conference on 31 March 2023. The ELRN network provides a forum for key regulators and administrators to exchange experiences and share best practices in the field of lobbying regulation, from across Europe.

This year's conference brought together in Scotland, in-person and online, representatives from Austria, Catalonia (Spain), Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Serbia, Slovenia, and the UK.

As well as hearing about progress from the newest members (Finland, Germany, and Greece), discussions covered the various technology platforms used for different lobbying registers and barriers and solutions to compliance issues. Our key speaker was Pauline Bertrand from the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) to discuss OECD's work on its principles for transparency and integrity in lobbying.



IT

In June 2023 it was confirmed that a range of enhancements would be introduced over the summer to improve the user experience of the current system. Subsequently, on 21 July the following improvements were introduced.

- A new **dashboard** landing page for registrants, providing at-a-glance information and a one-stop area for registrants to:
 - check the status of information returns
 - check on returns ‘never submitted’
 - see their current statutory submission period
 - note when registration details were last updated
 - check their registered email address
 - submit an information return or a nil return
- **Additionally:**
 - an upgraded ‘public’ search: including an improvement of the CSV function, to ensure it copes with larger search requests. Plus, more choices when searching for published information returns and registrant information details.
 - ‘Ghost text’ guidance in key areas of the information return for registrants
 - statutory submission period selection for registrants on information returns/nil returns



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Registrations

Clàraidhean

Registrations

The Register launched on 12 March 2018. This report covers data from that start date up until 12 June 2023 (i.e. five years and three months of full activity).

Active registrants

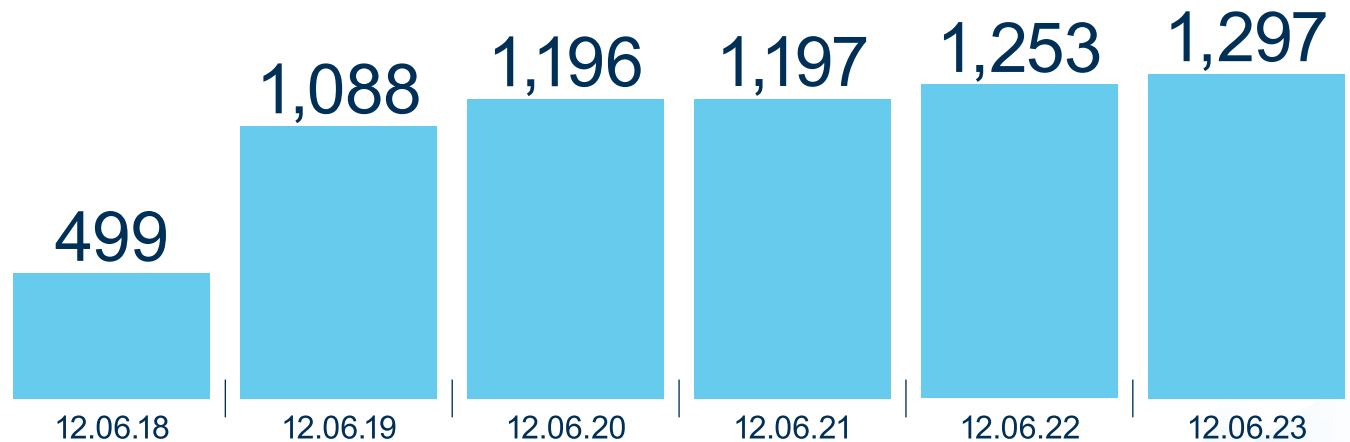
The **table below** shows the increasing net number of active registrants, as recorded at the end of each reporting year since 2018.

Registrants by number

As of 12 June 2023, a total of **1,462** organisations had been registered on the Lobbying Register.

These are defined by **active** (1,297), **inactive** (152) and **voluntary** (13) status.

Annex A lists new active, inactive, and voluntary registrants over the reporting year.



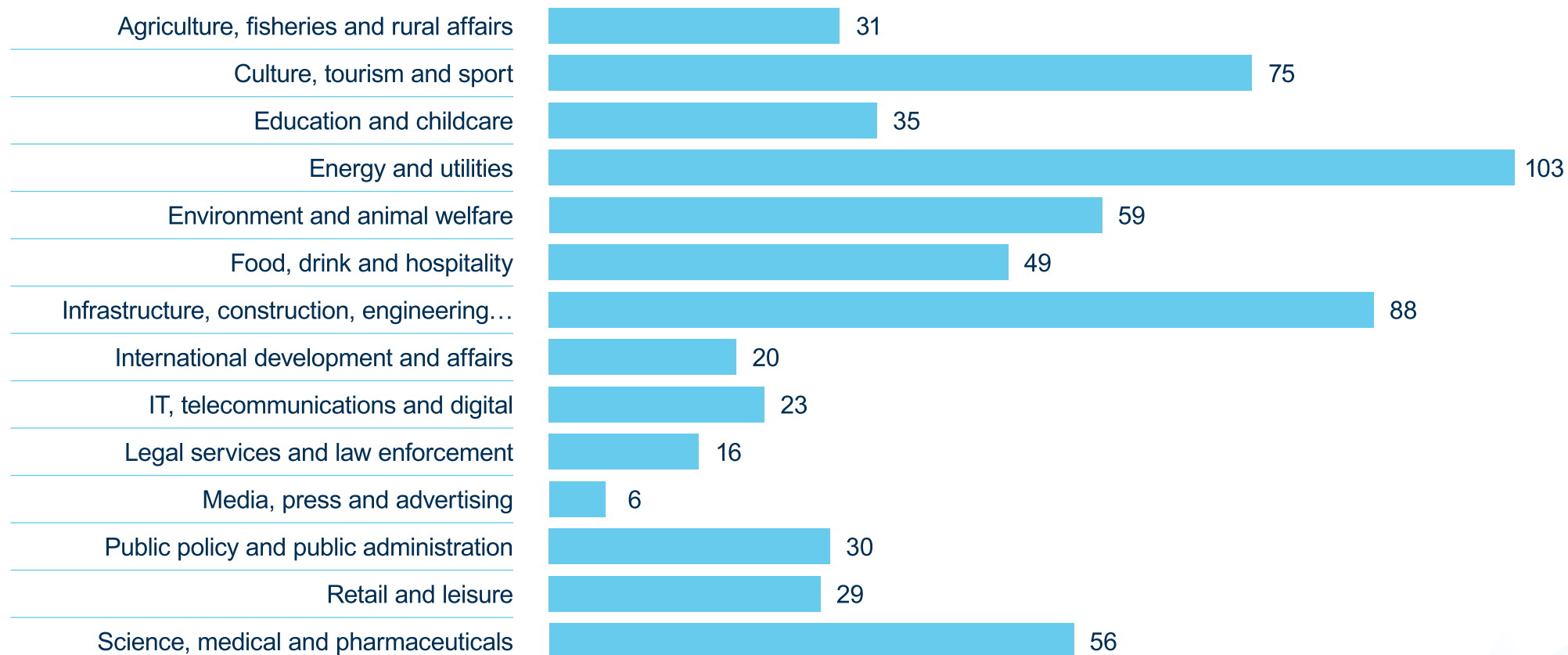
Registrants by sector

The tables below show the range and size of sectors, for all active and voluntary organisations, on the Lobbying Register.

This table sets out the **top five sectors** currently active on the Register.



This table sets out all the **remaining sectors** currently active on the Register





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Information Returns

Aithrisean Fiosrachaidh

Information returns

Each registrant must submit an Information Return for every instance of regulated lobbying. These are known as **substantive returns**.

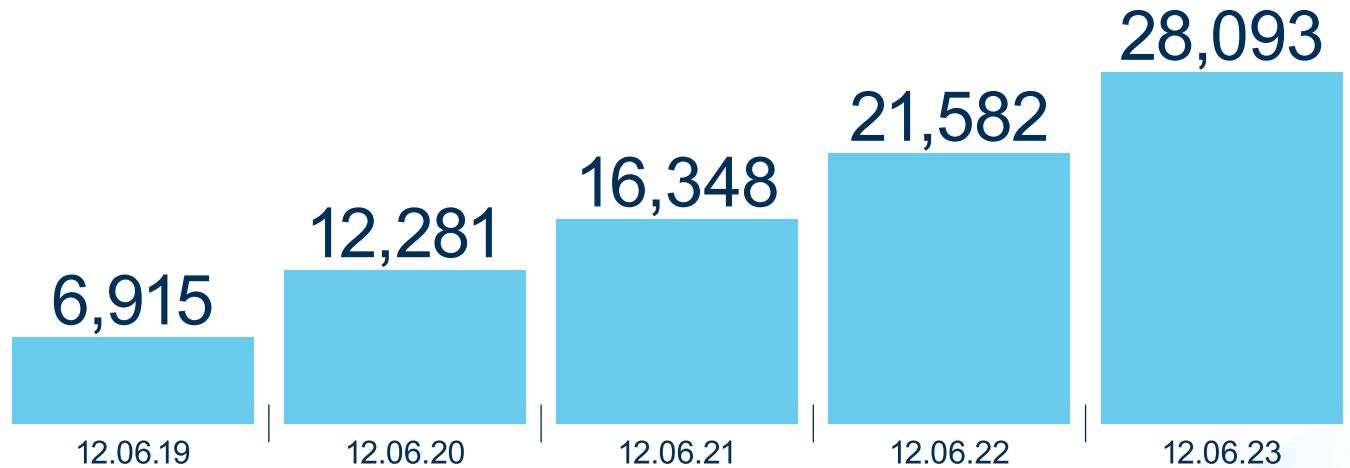
If a registrant has not engaged over its statutory six-month reporting period, then a **nil return** must be submitted, instead.

Information returns each year

The **table below** shows the increasing number of published Information Returns, as recorded at the end of each reporting year since 2018.

Information returns by number

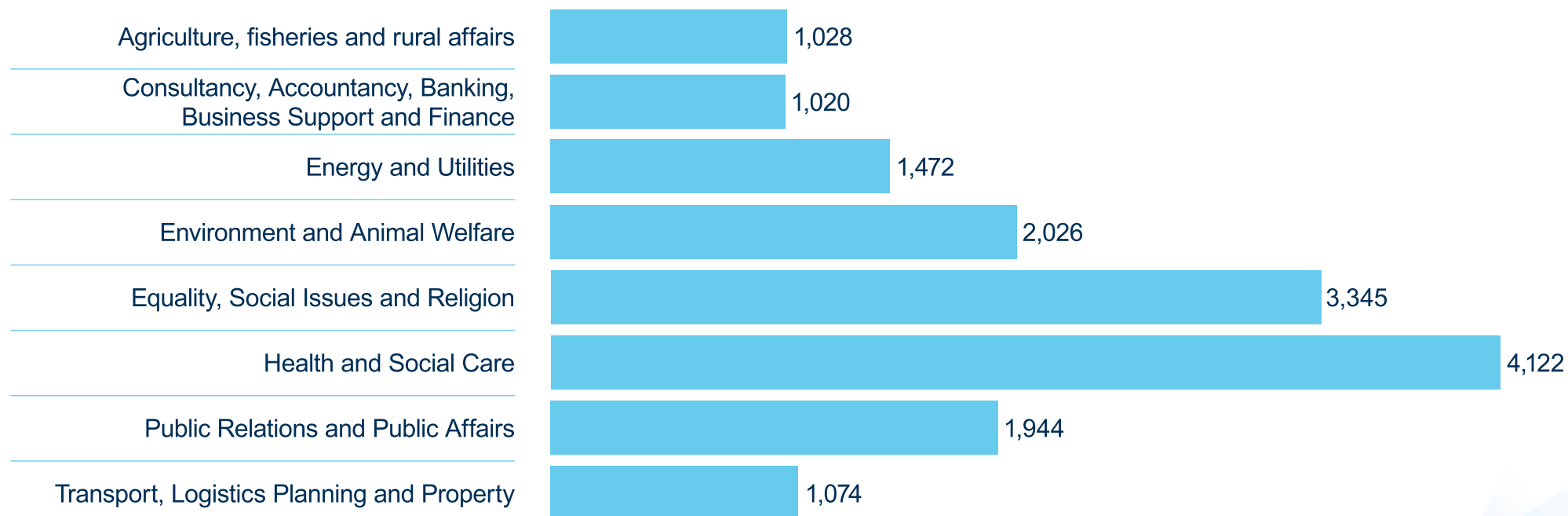
Of the **28,093** returns published, a total of **21,870** were substantive returns and **6,223** nil returns had been published on the Lobbying Register.



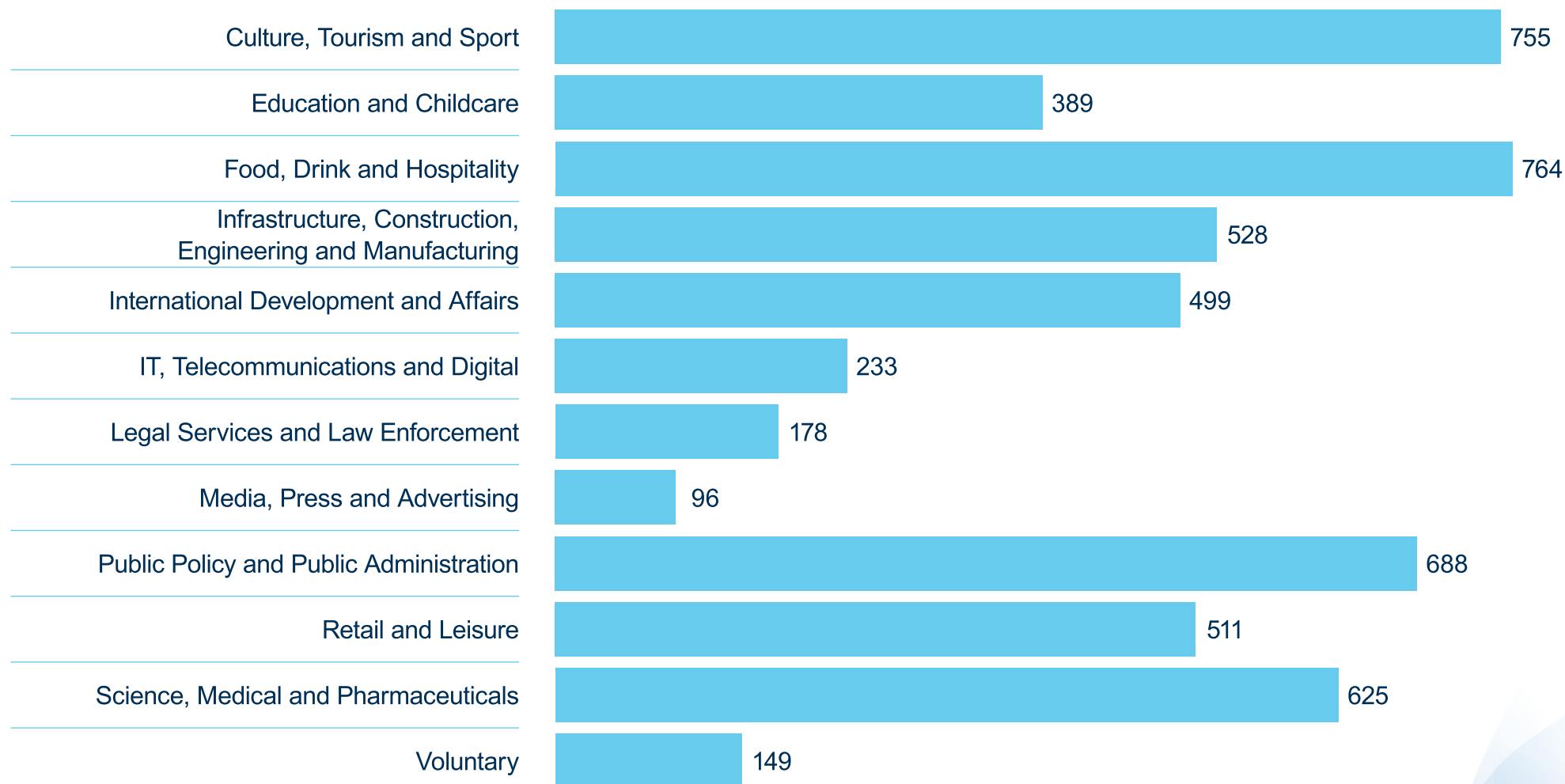
Information returns by sector

The tables below show the numbers of substantive Information Returns published by primary sector on the Lobbying Register.

This table sets out sectors with **more than 1,000 substantive information returns** published.



This table sets out sectors with **less than 1,000** substantive information returns published.



Information returns process

The Act sets out what is ‘regulated lobbying’. Not all forms of lobbying are covered by the Act. The following sets out the process for submitting and assessing Information Returns.

The ‘**Five Key Steps**’ contained within the [Parliamentary Guidance](#) provide a ‘quick guide’ to help registrants assess whether, or not, they have engaged in regulated lobbying.

If a communication made by a registrant fits with all the Five Key Steps, then that indicates the registrant will need to submit an Information Return, detailing what the regulated lobbying undertaken was.

Information Returns are completed by an organisation logging into its account on the Register at www.lobbying.scot; creating a new Information Return and submitting this online to the Lobbying Register Team for initial checking.

Once an Information Return is submitted it is reviewed by the Lobbying Register Team to check that the activity outlined amounts to regulated lobbying, as set out by the Act.

This check includes an analysis of the details provided and consideration of whether any exemptions in the Act might apply.

Feedback is then offered to the registrant where required and changes sought before final publication. Refinements are made by the Lobbying Register Team and published without recourse, as part of a pragmatic approach to assist registrants.

Key Dates

- You have up to 6 months (and two additional weeks) from the date you applied to register an account, to submit Information Returns on your regulated lobbying activity. The additional two weeks allow time for Information Returns to be submitted after the 6 month period ends. However, you can submit Information Returns at any time during your 6 month period.
- You will receive an email to remind you about your 6 month deadline in advance and likewise with all subsequent 6 month deadlines that will follow.
- Please note, if after 6 months you have not engaged in any regulated lobbying, you are still legally required to submit a ‘nil’ Information Return on the Lobbying Register to indicate this.
- It’s important to note that if you carried out regulated lobbying before registering an account, you should register and then submit an Information Return within 30 days about that first occurrence or you will be in breach of Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016.



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Compliance

Gèilleadh

Statement letters to Chief Executives - actions required

Since the Lobbying Register was established over 28,000 information returns have been published in its first five years.

Statistically to date, a third of Information Returns submitted have required the Lobbying Register Team to email an organisation, to request a change or a clarification, before a return can be published. The standard deadline for an organisation to take this action is now two weeks. This will typically involve the organisation resubmitting the return with the necessary change or replying by email to provide clarity on a question raised.

This has led to some organisations not responding on some returns, sometimes despite several reminders being sent. As time passes, these unresolved actions can become problematic (staff leaving etc.) and the process of repetitive requests for action also creates an administrative burden on the Lobbying Register Team, and of course a compliance concern.

Last year's annual report highlighted the intention of the Lobbying Register Team to issue a letter containing a **statement on performance and actions required** to every Chief Executive, or equivalent, of a registered organisation. These letters provide a senior leadership level with information on the completed activities, compliance performance and unresolved actions (if any) of the organisation and help flag what needs attention.

This task is underway, following some additional investment required in 2023 in IT enhancements and the staff resource of the Lobbying Register Team, to help run this key audit process. This will lead to the publication of some 'older' returns from organisations (including some within the COVID pandemic period) and will be ongoing until all organisations have been contacted and unresolved actions concluded.

Organisations are also being encouraged to pro-actively check its new 'dashboard' on the Lobbying Register for any unresolved actions under 'returns requiring attention' and not wait until your organisation's letter is received.

The Lobbying Register Team is prioritising organisations with multiple unresolved actions on Information Returns, with those particular letters indicating that matters must be resolved within a set time-period. A continued failure to do so can lead to the issuing of an **Information Notice** under [section 17 of the Act](#), by the Parliament. Should that be required, the date and name of any organisation issued an Information Notice will be published on the Lobbying Register website.

Breaches - improvements required

Last year's annual report also set out several measures to help reduce the number of breaches. A 'breach' in this occurrence is when a registrant organisation fails to submit a return(s), or nil return, following the end date of its six-month reporting period (organisations have two weeks following the end of the period to submit returns or a nil return). The requirement to do so is contained in Section 11 of the Act.

A reminder email of the deadline is sent to every organisation's registered email address, two weeks before the end of the period. Despite this, breaches still occur. As each breach must be followed up by the Lobbying Register Team as part of its ongoing compliance responsibilities, this task creates a further compliance burden on the team.

During this reporting year there have been a further 705 breaches, a figure which remains too high. The performance rate of each registered organisation in relation to submitting on time its returns, or a nil return, is being brought to the attention of each organisation's Chief Executive, as part of the **statement letter** process.

It remains an option for Parliament to legislate in future for the introduction of a Fixed Penalty Notice system for such breaches, however, it is hoped that the direct action being taken through the Chief Executive letters will lead to the improvements required.

Last year's [annual report](#) also set out that we would publish within future annual reports more detail about breaches that have occurred, given the continuing high numbers. As such, in addition to the associated data issued with this 2023 report, a section will now be added to the main body of the report in 2024, detailing breaches made by organisations over the preceding reporting year (13 June 2023 to 12 June 2024). This is outlined in our revised [Privacy Notice](#) pages 25-29.



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Annexes

Leas-phàipearan

Annex A - New active, inactive and voluntary registrants

Active registrants – new

In the last reporting year, a total 81 new organisations were made active on the Lobbying Register.

Aluminium Packaging Recycling Organisation

09 September 2022

Amarin Pharmaceuticals

28 September 2022

Amey Group Services Ltd

20 February 2023

Amgen Limited

03 November 2022

Ardgowan Hospice

30 March 2023

Arup

XX 2022/3

Ascom UK

14 April 2023

Asper Investment Management

06 July 2022

Association of Chief Officers of Scottish Voluntary Organisations

20 December 2022

Belltown Power UK Limited

24 May 2023

BlackRock

03 October 2022

Borderlink Broadband Limited

10 October 2022

Central Rebar Ltd

18 November 2022

Cereal Partners Worldwide

27 February 2023

Circularity Scotland

31 May 2023

Community Energy Scotland

01 November 2022

Copenhagen Offshore Partners

22 November 2022

Corio Generation Limited

17 June 2022

Cyrenians

24 August 2022

Deliveroo

12 October 2022

Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity

13 March 2023

Energy & Utility Skills

06 December 2022

EPower Limited

16 September 2022

Financial Services

Compensation Scheme

29 September 2022

Fusion Students

09 November 2022

**General Synod of the
Scottish Episcopal Church**

27 September 2022

Glasgow Film

13 June 2022

Guts UK Charity

03 October 2022

Healthcare Public Affairs

22 June 2022

Independent Trustee Services Limited

28 November 2022

Institute of Hospitality Scotland

09 August 2022

Intelligent Health Ltd

30 August 2022

Jazz Pharmaceuticals

21 July 2022

Killmac Ltd

24 February 2023

Learning Foundation

14 June 2022

LNG9

21 March 2023

LTA (Lawn Tennis Association)

26 September 2022

Meallmore Ltd

22 July 2022

Moderna UK

01 July 2022

Mondelez UK

25 January 2023

National Gas

02 May 2023

National Trails UK

02 May 2023

Natural Power Consultants Ltd

07 September 2022

Nuclear Industry Association

14 June 2022

Ocean Winds

31 May 2023

Offshore Wind Power Limited

26 October 2022

Rail Partners

15 September 2022

Robertson Residential Group Ltd

28 July 2022

Royal Caribbean Group

25 November 2022

SAE Renewables

08 February 2023

Salary Finance Limited

25 January 2023

Scotland's Regional Moorland Groups

14 September 2022

Scottish Agritourism

11 December 2022

Scottish Seabird Centre

12 September 2022

Scottish Womens' Premier League

05 April 2023

Shionogi

09 January 2023

SmartPA

11 August 2022

Social Investment Scotland

29 November 2022

St Andrew's Hospice

28 February 2023

Stellar Murrayshall LLP

22 December 2022

Strathcarron Hospice

08 March 2023

Subsea7

22 November 2022

Suntory Beverage & Food GB&I

23 December 2022

The Booksellers Association of the United Kingdom and Ireland Limited

22 June 2022

The Fire Brigades Union

21 September 2022

The Landworkers' Alliance

01 June 2021 (late registration)

The Promise Scotland

29 June 2022

The R&A

21 March 2023

Thistle Wind Partners

05 July 2022

True North (Scotland) Ltd

05 July 2022

UK Mainstream Renewable Power Ltd

05 April 2023

UK Short Term Accommodation Association

20 December 2022

UK Hospitality Scotland

27 May 2021 (late registration)

Values Into Action Scotland

15 June 2022

Virgin Media O2

28 June 2022

VoiceAbility

08 February 2023

Woburn Partners

01 November 2022

YMCA Scotland

22 March 2023

Young Women's Movement
10 April 2023

Inactive registrants - new

In the last reporting year, **44** registrants have been removed from the Register, following a declaration that they are no longer engaged in regulated lobbying.

Abellio ScotRail Ltd

15 May 2023

Aker Offshore Wind

02 November 2022

Allergan Aesthetics (formerly Allergan UK)

09 January 2023

Amey PLC

05 May 2023

Atlas Communications Partners Ltd.

19 September 2022

Baccus Consulting

17 October 2022

BSW Timber Ltd

25 October 2022

Democritus Ltd

30 September 2022

EOLFI

30 September 2022

European Public Policy Associates (EPPA)

01 February 2023

George Capital LLP

27 July 2022

GL Hearn Limited

07 June 2023

Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity

12 January 2023

Green Highland Renewables Ltd

03 November 2022

Green Ink Studio Ltd

04 May 2023

Grieg Seafood Shetland Ltd

23 November 2022

Homeless Action Scotland

18 May 2023

Iceni Projects Ltd

10 February 2023

Indigo

02 May 2023

Link Group

08 October 2022

Manson Architects + Planners

24 October 2022

Paterson Arran Limited

01 October 2022

Robertson Capital Projects

Hub Investments Limited

26 July 2022

Robertson Capital Projects

Investments 2 Limited

26 October 2022

Robertson Capital Projects

Investments 3 Limited

28 July 2022

Robertson Capital Projects Limited

02 July 2022

Robertson Construction Central Limited

02 July 2022

Robertson Construction Group Limited

28 July 2022

Robertson Construction Highland Limited

26 July 2022

Robertson Facilities Management Limited

26 July 2022

Robertson Living Limited

26 July 2022

Robertson Property (No 1) Limited

26 July 2022

Robertson Property (No 2) Limited

26 July 2022

Robertson Property (No 3) Limited

26 July 2022

Robertson Property (No 4) Limited

26 July 2022

Robertson Property Limited

26 July 2022

Robertson Regeneration Limited

26 July 2022

Robertson Residential Managed Properties

26 July 2022

Sarah Chisnall

22 February 2023

South Shore Developments Limited

28 July 2022

Square Peg Consulting

16 August 2022

SVM Asset Management Ltd

24 May 2023

Vattenfall Heat UK Ltd

27 April 2023

vento ludens Limited

24 October 2022

Voluntary registrants - new

In the last reporting year, **3** new organisations joined as voluntary registrants on the Lobbying Register.

Zero Hours Justice

14 March 2023

Koehler Renewable Energy UK Ltd

22 December 2022

Migrants' Rights Network

19 August 2022

Annex B - Report data

Data covers the period 12 March 2018 until 12 June 2023 and is published as an accompaniment to this Report, within a searchable excel spreadsheet. This includes:

Active Registrants:

- Registrant Name
- True registration date (i.e., date of registration or first day of lobbying)
- Registrant Type
- Registrant subject area (primary)
- Current statutory period
- Number of substantive returns published
- Number nil returns published
- Number of breach emails issued

Inactive Registrants:

- Registrant Name
- True registration date (i.e. date of registration or first day of lobbying)
- Date made inactive
- Registrant Type
- Registrant subject area (primary)
- Current statutory period
- Number of substantive returns published
- Number nil returns published
- Number of breach emails issued

Voluntary Registrants:

- Registrant Name
- True registration date (i.e., date of registration or first day of lobbying)
- Registrant Type
- Number of substantive returns published



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