

## Engagement and speaker request procedure

### Aim

The ICO receives requests from external stakeholders for engagement with the ICO at senior levels (SLT members) and for speakers at conferences and seminars at all levels. As the ICO grows, both in size and in its responsibilities, it is important that it has clear procedures for managing these requests.

### Related policies and procedures

The guidance supports the "Request an ICO Speaker" policy available [here](#). The ICO Gifts and Hospitality policy should also be read, in particular section 5. The policy is available [here](#).

### Who should read this document?

This procedure should be read by SLT, Department Heads and members of the Triage and Corporate Governance teams.

### Background information

#### What is covered?

#### **Engagement**

The procedure covers requests from external stakeholders for engagement with SLT members; eg requests for meetings with the Commissioner or her deputies on information rights issues and on other matters affecting the ICO.

#### **Speaking requests**

The procedure covers **all** requests to the office for speakers to talk at external events.

#### What is not covered?

The procedure does not cover business as usual, for example requests for meetings about enforcement action in a particular case or a request for a meeting on a policy matter from someone you already have regular meetings with.

In terms of engagement the test is whether you think a member of SLT might need to attend.

## Overview

All requests for speakers should be made via the online form available on the website. Requests for engagement which, it is thought, might require SLT involvement should be emailed to the “engagement” email address.

The Corporate Governance Team collates requests received on a weekly basis and arranges for a Triage Team to assess the requests received and to take forward accepted requests.

Where the Triage Team thinks that the request is appropriate for SLT to consider the Corporate Governance Team arranges for the request to come to SLT for a final decision.

## Detailed procedure

### Engagement request

Requests from external stakeholders for engagement with the ICO at senior levels will be received by email, post or telephone, by a wide range of ICO staff. Those receiving requests should decide whether the request is possibly suitable for SLT members to be involved in. If this is the case the request should be forwarded to the “engagements” email address. If not it should be dealt with as business as usual by those who received it.

The Corporate Governance Team monitors the “engagement” email address on a daily basis and requests received are moved to the “waiting for triage” folder.

### Speaker requests

Requests for an ICO speaker will be received via the online form available [here](#). Once completed the form is automatically sent to the “speakers” email address.

Where someone makes a request for a speaker via other routes; eg by email to members of staff or over the telephone, the person who receives the request should ask the requester to make the request via the online form.

The Corporate Governance Team monitors the “speakers” email address on a daily basis and requests received are moved to the “waiting for triage” folder.

### Triage

The Corporate Governance Team manages a weekly triage of engagement and speaker requests on a Monday.

In the first instance the Corporate Governance Team identifies duplicate requests and ones which obviously do not meet the acceptance criteria (**annex A**). In the latter cases the Corporate Governance Team will send a response declining the request.

The Corporate Governance Team then processes those requests deemed suitable for the formal triage:

- details are entered onto the "Engagements Request Log" spreadsheet held on MERIDIO [here](#); and
- relevant areas of the spreadsheet and individual request forms are printed off and made available to members of the Triage Team.

Information on spreadsheets used is available at **annex B**.

The Triage Team consists of

- Robert Parker Head of Communications
- Jonathan Bamford Head of Parliament and Government Affairs
- Jo Pedder Head of Policy and Engagement
- Ken Macdonald Head of the Regions
- Nigel Houlden Head of Policy Technology
- Head of ISID (currently Hannah McCausland attends)
- Caroline Robinson Corporate Governance Officer

If a Triage Team member cannot attend, the member has to ensure a deputy attends. If there are not enough members available to make decisions the Corporate Governance Team should pass urgent requests to SLT to consider at their next Friday informal meeting and hold back other requests for the following week's triage.

The Triage Team has to consider requests passed to it and decide:

- whether the ICO could accept or decline the request in principle, and
- if accepted whether the request is one which should possibly be undertaken by a member of SLT.

If the request is one the ICO could "accept in principle" but SLT involvement is not thought necessary, it is for the appropriate Triage Team member to take the request and deal with it promptly. They should:

- check that the request can actually be accepted (eg there is some one available on the day who can do it);
- send an acknowledgement to the requester confirming that the request is accepted and who will be the contact; or
- if it is not possible to accept the request, advise them (and the Corporate Governance Team) that the request is rejected.

The Corporate Governance Team:

- records the decisions made on the spreadsheet, copying the entries into the appropriate part of the spreadsheet and sending the appropriate Triage Team member the details of requests accepted in principle;
- advises those whose requests are declined by the Triage Team that the request has been declined; and
- prepares those requests identified for SLT consideration for SLT informal the following Friday.

In exceptional circumstances there may not be enough information to decide if a request should be accepted or not and further information or discussion is needed. In these cases the appropriate Triage Team member will take responsibility for doing what is necessary to allow a decision to be made. The Corporate Governance Team will note that the request is “pending” and ensure the matter is chased at the next triage meeting.

#### SLT decisions

The SLT meet informally most Fridays. The day beforehand the Corporate Governance Team should send SLT members (and attendees Robert Parker and Amanda Williams) copies of a spreadsheet detailing the requests referred to SLT for decision and requests accepted or rejected by the Triage Team.

It is the responsibility of SLT members to ensure that the requests are considered and decisions recorded. The Corporate Governance Team will record the decisions.

If SLT decides that SLT involvement is appropriate, either in respect of an engagement or speaking request, it is for that individual SLT member to take the request forward. The Corporate Governance Team will send the relevant executive assistant the paperwork on accepted requests.

Where requests are not thought to require SLT involvement but are thought to be useful for the ICO to accept, they are to be passed to the appropriate member of the Triage Team to take forward.

If requests are rejected by SLT the Corporate Governance Team is responsible for advising the requester.

#### Record keeping

The Corporate Governance Team will ensure that the spreadsheet used to record the decisions made is kept on MERIDIO and is up to date. Relevant correspondence should also be kept on MERIDIO.

#### Sample responses

Templates for sample responses are available [here](#).

## Annexes

- Acceptance criteria – annex A
- Completing the spreadsheets – annex B

## Individual responsible for the document

Peter Bloomfield, Senior Corporate Governance Manager

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## Guidance on speaker requests

Criteria on whether to accept or decline speaker requests.

- Match of the subject matter to the ICO Information Rights Strategy and communications priorities.
- Nature of the audience – eg key national or regional policy makers and information rights specialists whose views and support are important to the ICO's Information Rights Strategy.
- Opportunity for a major announcement – potential press coverage.
- Whether the event is overtly political - we should not accept invitations to speak at overtly political events such as political party conferences. The Cabinet Office issues guidance at the appropriate time.
- Whether the event is shortly before an election or a referendum - we should be careful about accept speaking events before an election (general, devolved or local) or a referendum. The Cabinet Office issue guidance at the appropriate time.
- Whether accepting a request could embarrass the ICO, for example if we are taking or considering taking enforcement action against the organising body, or the event is commercial and the ICO is the only speaking body.
- Timeliness of the request – finding preparation time and diary time to attend the actual event gets more difficult closer to the event.
- Ease of getting to the event – eg London based and fitting in with other meetings.





## Completing the spreadsheets

### Getting Ready for the Triage Meeting

Print off all the forms in the “waiting for triage” folder prior to the meeting and add the details into the Engagements spreadsheet.

Date received	Speaker Request/	Event Title	Event dates	Location	Speaker Requested/ Meeting With	Organisation	Event Contact Name	Reply Deadline
19/12/2017	Speaker	CIPPM Symposium on GDPR	Feb	Bournemouth Uni		CIPPM Bournemouth University	Dr Sally Weston	15/01/18
19/12/2017	Meeting	Insurance Governance Leadership Network	13/03/2018	London	Elizabeth Denham/Steve Wood	Tapestry Networks	Eric Baldwin	15/01/18
20/12/2017	Speaker	South West Annual Internal Audit Conference	16/05/2018	Bristol	David Teague	Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors	Jonathan Dickens	15/01/18

### During the Triage Meeting

Make a note of the decision; whether to accept or decline a request. Sometimes a member of the team will take a request for further consideration (these should be marked as “pending”). The team may decide that a request should go to SLT for further consideration.

### After the Triage Meeting

- 1) Make a note in the spreadsheet whether the request has been accepted, rejected, pending or to go to SLT. Mark any comments on the spreadsheet.
- 2) Colour code the different decisions

Accepted
Declined
Pending
SLT

- 3) Copy the events that have been accepted, are pending or are For SLT into the appropriate tab in the spreadsheet.

Requests Received	Accepted	Pending	For SLT
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**Spreadsheet for SLT Triage**

Each week the SLT will have a new spreadsheet that shows the decisions made at the weekly triage meeting. Copy the events from the Engagements Log into the appropriate tab in the spreadsheet

For SLT Input	AcceptedPending @ Triage	Declined @ Triage
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These spreadsheets should be saved each week in "1.02.07 Private Office Group > Speakers Triage > SLT Triage"