

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Statistics on implementation in central government

July - September 2012

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

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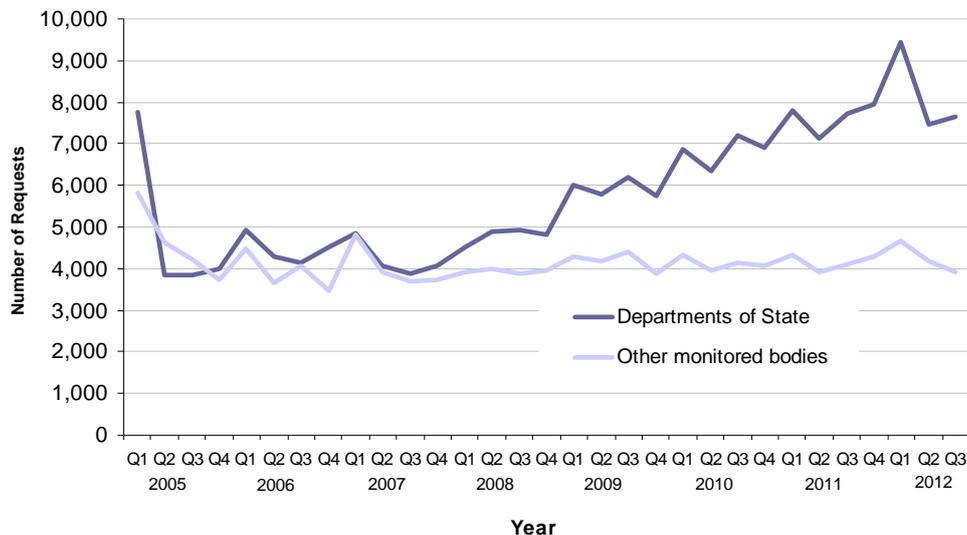
Executive summary

Number of requests [see Tables A1 & A2]

In July to September (Q3) 2012 the monitored central government bodies received a total of 11,563 non-routine FOI (Freedom of Information Act) requests, 2 per cent less than in Q3 of 2011. In the first three quarters of 2012 there have been 37,313 requests.

Although there has been considerable quarter-on-quarter variation, monitored bodies have received a generally increasing number of requests since 2007. This has been driven by an increase in requests to Departments of State. However, there is some evidence the increase has slowed in the last two years. The peak in Q1 2012 was due to large rises in requests to the Department of Health and the Department of Work and Pensions, regarding controversial policies being introduced. Requests to the Department of Work and Pensions remain high, but requests to the Department of Health have returned to their Q4 2011 levels.

Figure 1: Number of requests received since the Act's introduction in January 2005



Timeliness of response to requests [see Tables A3 & A4]

92 per cent of the requests during Q3 2012 received a response within the statutory deadline or were subject to a permitted deadline extension, a slight decrease on the 93 per cent in the last quarter.

Initial outcomes of requests [see Tables A5 & A6]

Of all requests where it was possible to make a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought received during Q3 2012 53% were granted in full and 28% were withheld in full, the remainder being granted in part or the response has not yet been provided.

Contents

Executive summary	3
Introduction	5
Results	6
Number of request	6
Timeliness of response to requests	7
Initial outcomes of requests	8
Use of exemptions and exceptions	10
Annex A: Statistical Tables	12
Annex B: Important note on the scope and consistency	26
Annex C: List of Government bodies	29
Annex D: Explanatory notes	34
Contacts	36

Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and the associated Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) came fully into force on 1 January 2005. This bulletin presents the latest set of quarterly statistics on their implementation within central government, giving quarterly statistics for the period July to September 2012. Full statistical tables can be found in Annex A.

The previous quarterly and annual bulletins, together covering the period from January 2005 to June 2012, are available via the links on the following pages of the Ministry of Justice and National Archives websites:

www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/FOI/implementation

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/freedomofinformationquarterly-archive.htm>

The statistics in this bulletin relate to the handling of written requests for information received by monitored bodies during the relevant time period. They cover only non-routine information requests - information given out on request as a part of routine business should not be counted. Annex B gives a definition of a non-routine request, and other information on the scope of these statistics. More information regarding EIRs is available via:

<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/corporate/policy/opengov/eir/>

This bulletin publishes monitoring statistics for a total of 41 central government bodies, including all major Departments of State. Annex C gives a full list of monitored bodies¹.

The statistics are designed to allow the monitored bodies to compare and monitor their performance in handling Freedom of Information requests, to inform the development Freedom of Information policy across government, and for politicians, lobby groups, members of the public and others to hold the monitored bodies to account.

Departmental name changes

Please refer to Annex C for full details of departmental name changes that have occurred since Q3 2010.

¹ The statistics reflect the management and implementation of the FOI Act by each monitored body and comparisons between departments can be made on this basis. There could be a degree of inconsistency in the way in which bodies have interpreted and applied the definition of an 'information request' for monitoring purposes – please see Annex B for further information.

Results

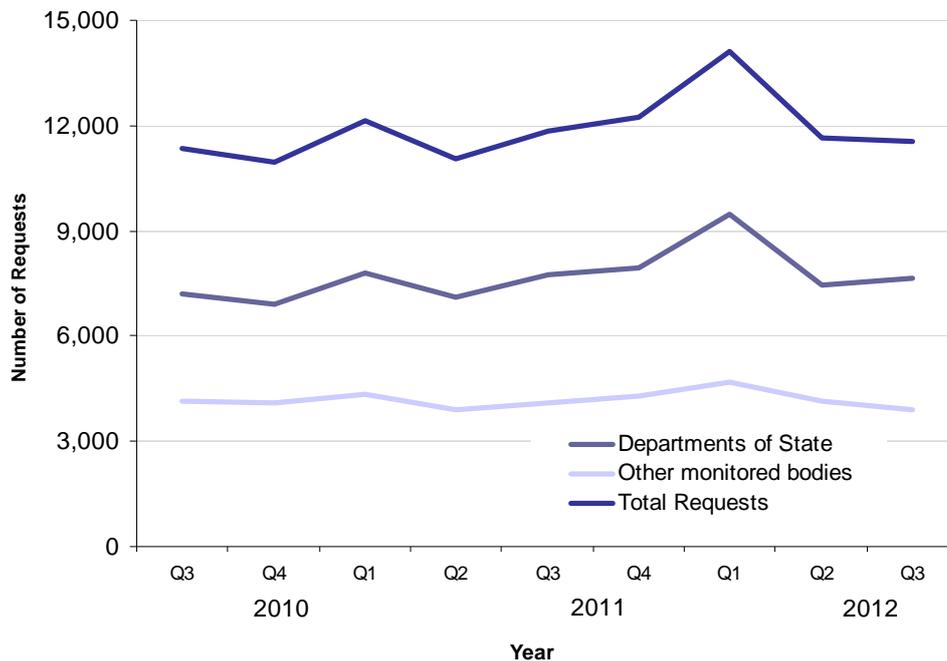
Number of requests [see Tables A1 & A2]

Departments of State reported receiving a total of 7,646 information requests under the Freedom of Information Act and the associated Environmental Information Regulations during the quarter from 1 July to 30 September 2012 (Q3). Other monitored bodies reported having received 3,917 requests. Across all monitored bodies, therefore, a total of 11,563 requests were reported.

This overall total for Q3 of 2012 is 2 per cent less than in Q3 of 2011, and 1 per cent less than in Q2 of this year.

While there has been some quarter-on-quarter variation, there has not been a substantial increase in the number of requests received over the past two years as illustrated by Figure 2.

Figure 2: Numbers of FOI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies by quarter from Q3 2010



The number of requests received by Departments of State was 1 per cent less than during the same period last year, while the total received by other monitored bodies has fallen by 4 per cent. Departments of State accounted for 66 per cent of all requests received by monitored bodies in Q3 of 2012, a slight increase on Q2 2012

Of the Departments of State, the Department for Work and Pensions reported having received 1,156 requests during Q3, the highest departmental total. The other departments that received more than 800 requests were: the Home Office with 973 and the Ministry of Defence with 817 requests.

Among other monitored bodies, the Health and Safety Executive reported having received 1,617 requests during Q3, while the National Archives received 720. The Health and Safety Executive is the only monitored body to have received more than 1,000 requests during each quarter since the Act was implemented. These two bodies combined account for 60 per cent of all requests received by all the other monitoring bodies. Therefore the trends for the other monitored bodies group as a whole are heavily dependant on the trends for these two particular bodies.

Monitoring statistics also show the number of non-routine information requests that fell fully or mostly under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs). There were 430 such requests during the third quarter of 2012, accounting for 4 per cent of all requests received.

Of the monitored bodies with requests falling under the EIRs, the Rural Payments Agency, the Health and Safety Executive, Department of Energy and Climate Change, the Department for Transport and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with more than 50 requests each, had the highest totals.

Status of requests at time of monitoring *[see Table A1]*

A large majority of requests (96 per cent) received during Q3 had been processed by the time monitoring information was collected. 418 requests were still being processed, and 46 requests were reported as 'on hold' or 'lapsed' because a fee had been charged but no payment had been received. The on hold and lapsed requests are effectively in suspension since public authorities are not obliged to respond until the fee has been paid.

Timeliness of response to requests *[see Tables A3 & A4]*

The FOI Act requires most public bodies to respond to written requests for information within 20 working days of receipt. There are limited exceptions, for example to allow additional time for the consideration of public interest, and a 30 working day deadline applies where requests relate wholly or partly to information transferred to the National Archives, which has provided response timeliness information on this basis.

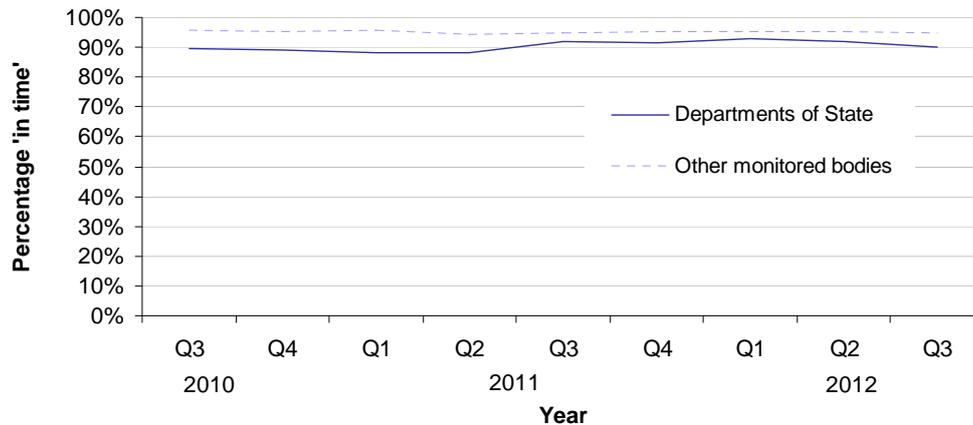
Across all monitored bodies:

- 87 per cent of requests received during Q3 of 2012 were sent a response within the 20 or 30 working day deadline – the same as in Q2 2012.

- 92 per cent of the requests received during Q3 of 2012 were ‘in time’, in that they either received a response within the standard deadline or were subject to a permitted deadline extension. This is a decrease on the 93 per cent from Q2 2012, and the peak of 94 per cent in Q1.

The average timeliness has consistently been just above 90 per cent for the last three years, as illustrated by Figure 3.

Figure 3: Percentage of FOI requests replied to ‘in time’ by Departments of State and other monitored bodies by quarter from Q3 2010



Initial outcomes of requests [see Tables A5 & A6]

Of the 11,563 requests reported during Q3 of 2012 across all monitored bodies, the following were not resolvable:

- 46 were ‘on hold’ awaiting a fee payment;
- 2,157 requests sought information that was not held;
- 720 were responded to with ‘advice and assistance’ because the body handling the request needed further information in order to identify the information being sought.

As a result, the remaining 8,640 requests were assumed to be ‘resolvable’, in that it would have been possible to give a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought.

Of the ‘resolvable’ requests received during Q3 of 2012,

- 53 per cent were granted in full, the same as Q2 2012;
- 15 per cent were withheld in part;
- 28 per cent were withheld in full;

- 5 per cent had not yet received a substantive response at the time of monitoring.

Figure 4 shows the proportion of requests granted in full has slowly reduced since the act was introduced. This may reflect the changing nature of requests as the monitored bodies have made more routine information available to the public.

Figure 4: Percentage of resolvable requests granted in full, Q1 2005 – Q3 2012

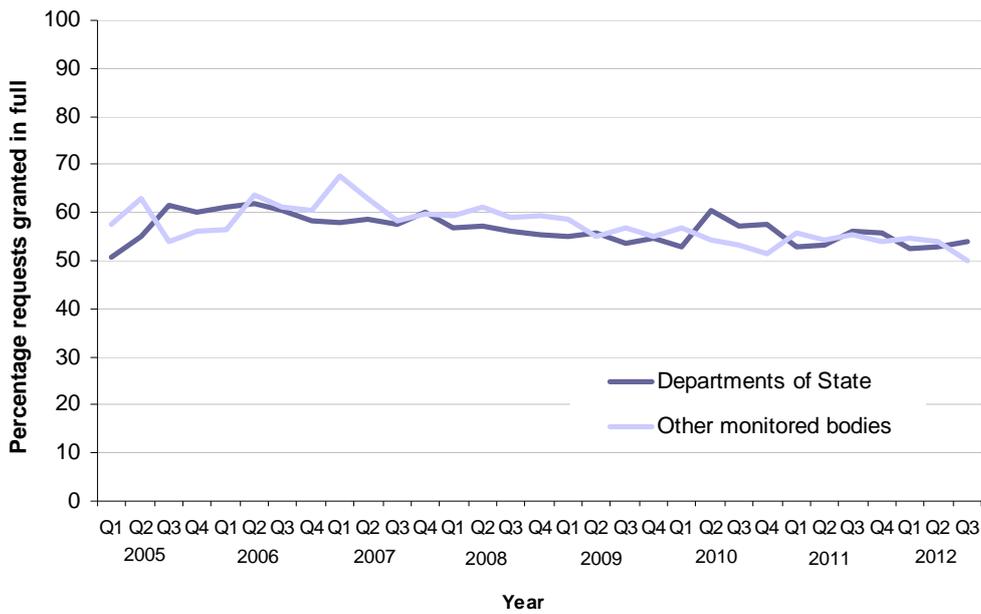
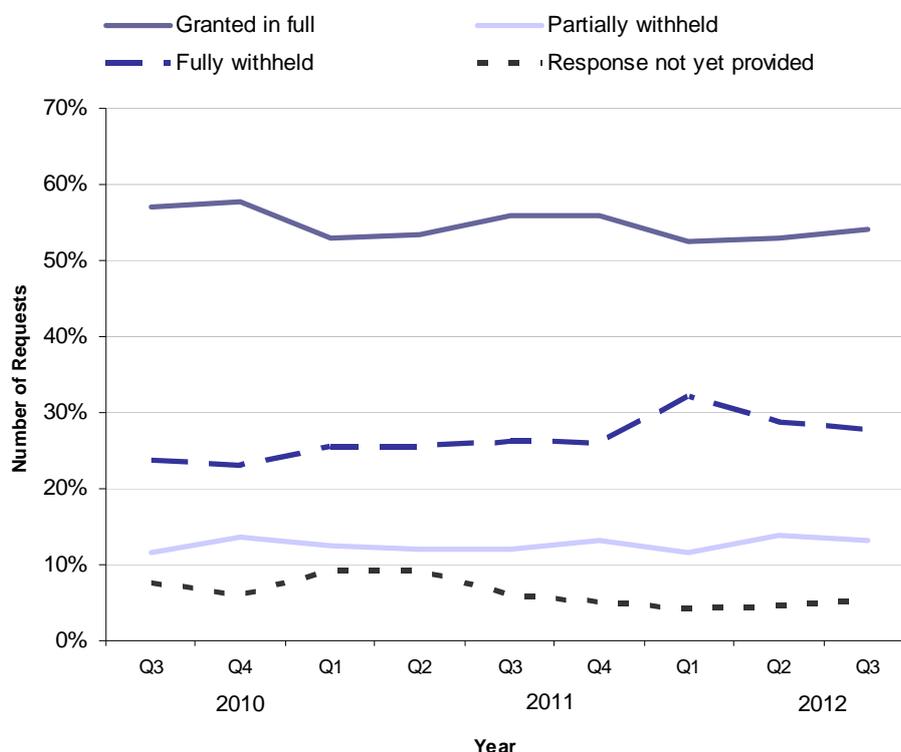


Figure 5 shows the breakdown of initial outcomes of 'resolvable' requests. It illustrates how the percentage of requests fully withheld has gradually risen, but the percentage granted in full slowly declined.

Figure 5: Initial outcomes of ‘resolvable’ FOI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies quarterly from Q3 2010



Use of exemptions and exceptions [see Table A7]

Under the FOI Act, a public authority can only refuse to provide requested information that it holds if:

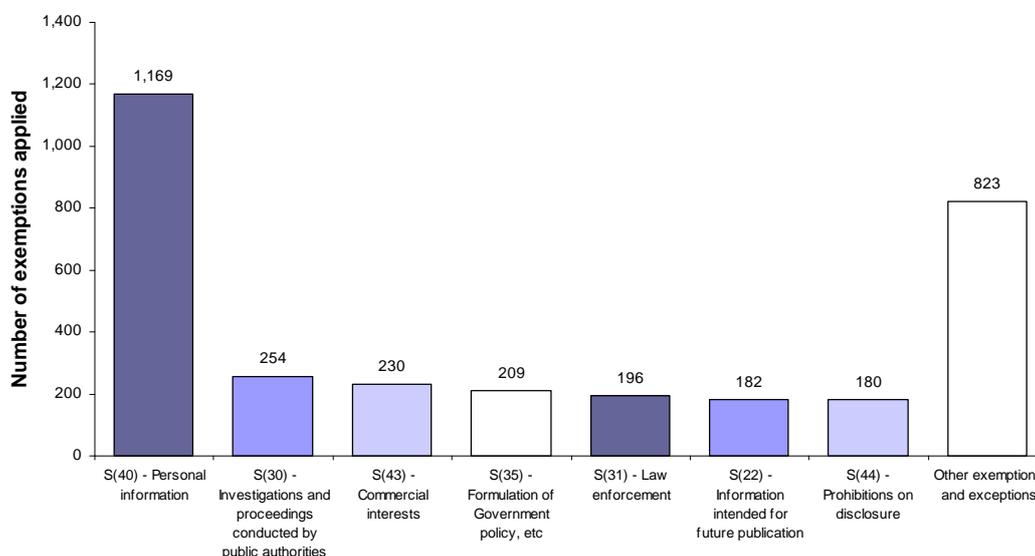
- The request is considered vexatious or repeated;
- The cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit;
- The information falls in one or more of the categories of exempt information ('exemptions') listed in Part II of the Act².

There are similar arrangements that apply to certain types of information under the EIRs. These list a number of 'exceptions to the duty to disclose environmental information' in Part 3 of the Regulations.

Across all monitored bodies, a total of 2,667 requests were reported as having one or more of these exemptions or exceptions applied to them during Q3.

² A summary of all exemptions can be found at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/information-access-rights/FOI-guidance-for-practitioners/exemptions-guidance/FOI-exemptions-summaries>

Figure 6: Number of exemptions and exceptions applied by Departments of State and other monitored bodies on requests received in Q3 2012



The most commonly applied exemptions or exceptions in Q3 2012 were:

- Section 40 of the FOI Act (relating to personal information), which was applied to 1,169 requests, and in 44 per cent of all exempt requests;
- Section 30 (investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities), which was applied to 254 requests and in 10 per cent of all exempt requests;
- and Section 43 (commercial interests) which was applied to 230 requests and in 9 per cent of all exempt requests.

Annex A: Statistical Tables

Latest quarterly (A1, A3, A5, A7) and in-year (A2, A4, A6) tables

Table A1	<i>Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July – 30 September 2012, and their status at time of monitoring</i>
Table A2	<i>Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 July 2010</i>
Table A3	<i>Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July – 30 September 2012</i>
Table A4	<i>Proportion of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were answered 'in time', by quarter, since 1 July 2010</i>
Table A5	<i>Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July – 30 September 2012</i>
Table A6	<i>Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 July 2010</i>
Table A7	<i>Exemptions and exceptions applied by monitored bodies when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 July – 30 September 2012</i>

Symbols and conventions

-	Not applicable
0	Nil
*	Percentage not supplied because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer
#	Figures supplied by these departments of state count non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well as those received by the departments themselves. Annex C gives full details
†	Government body changed during monitoring period. See Annex C

TABLE A1

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2012, and their status at time of monitoring

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring			
		Processed	On hold' or lapsed ¹	Still being processed	Number handled under EIRs ²
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	11,563	11,099	46	418	430
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,646	7,347	0	299	252
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,917	3,752	46	119	178
<i>Departments of State</i>					
Attorney General's Office	21	21	0	0	0
Cabinet Office #	357	332	0	25	0
Communities and Local Government	241	229	0	12	27
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	247	241	0	6	3
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	128	123	0	5	5
Department for Education	332	313	0	19	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	147	144	0	3	68
Department for International Development	80	77	0	3	1
Department for Transport #	701	692	0	9	51
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,156	1,091	0	65	0
Department of Energy and Climate Change	147	144	0	3	60
Department of Health	430	430	0	0	2
Export Credits Guarantee Department	9	8	0	1	0
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	279	255	0	24	7
HM Treasury #	713	693	0	20	28
Home Office #	973	922	0	51	0
Ministry of Defence #	817	779	0	38	0
Ministry of Justice #	757	744	0	13	0
Northern Ireland Office	49	48	0	1	0
Scotland Office	25	25	0	0	0
Wales Office	37	36	0	1	0

TABLE A1 continued

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2012, and their status at time of monitoring¹

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring ¹			Number handled under EIRs ²
		Processed	On hold' or lapsed ¹	Still being processed	
<i>Other bodies included in monitoring</i>					
Charity Commission	146	145	0	1	0
Crown Prosecution Service	171	166	0	5	0
Debt Management Office	9	9	0	0	0
Food Standards Agency	25	25	0	0	0
Health and Safety Executive	1,617	1,594	0	23	70
HM Land Registry	55	55	0	0	0
HM Revenue and Customs	447	437	0	10	1
National Archives	720	600	46	74	0
National Savings and Investments	17	17	0	0	0
Office for National Statistics	67	67	0	0	0
Office for Standards in Education	140	140	0	0	0
Office of Fair Trading	92	92	0	0	0
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	52	49	0	3	12
Office of Rail Regulation	39	38	0	1	1
Ordnance Survey	23	23	0	0	0
Royal Mint	4	4	0	0	0
Rural Payments Agency	117	116	0	1	94
Serious Fraud Office	21	20	0	1	0
Treasury Solicitor's Department	133	133	0	0	0
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	22	22	0	0	0

Notes

1 - Requests 'on hold' are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received at the time of monitoring. These requests are effectively suspended since public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made. Where a fee is charged and the deadline for payment expires, the request is deemed to have 'lapsed' as no further action is required from the public authority.

2 - The amended Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) came into force on 1 January 2005 to coincide with the FoI Act. For further information on the EIRs, see the main notes section of this publication.

TABLE A2

Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 July 2010

Government body	Number of non-routine information requests received								
	2010		2011				2012		
	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	11,339	10,972	12,128	11,029	11,829	12,221	14,116	11,634	11,563
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,200	6,898	7,783	7,124	7,738	7,942	9,452	7,468	7,646
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,139	4,074	4,345	3,905	4,091	4,279	4,664	4,166	3,917
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	37	29	31	42	36	44	49	48	21
Cabinet Office #	307	303	395	349	426	509	492	378	357
Communities and Local Government	237	235	250	221	242	230	179	168	241
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	244	280	293	256	273	229	299	231	247
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	165	158	142	195	161	177	184	185	128
Department for Education	263	217	328	245	289	287	349	313	332
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	142	139	183	150	166	164	200	179	147
Department for International Development	120	86	110	122	125	125	117	106	80
Department for Transport #	735	753	898	710	812	778	892	713	701
Department for Work and Pensions #	777	823	877	763	937	927	1,326	1,005	1,156
Department of Energy and Climate Change	144	123	125	115	131	159	216	144	147
Department of Health	522	526	617	417	478	433	1,077	417	430
Export Credits Guarantee Department	20	12	23	36	18	21	27	18	9
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	310	313	367	344	292	348	390	336	279
Government Equalities Office †	29	32	21	-	-	-	-	-	-
HM Treasury #	666	435	356	480	654	688	759	624	713
Home Office #	781	826	866	786	813	867	923	900	973
Ministry of Defence #	718	767	957	830	930	877	914	844	817
Ministry of Justice #	854	707	847	901	835	933	910	757	757
Northern Ireland Office	56	50	37	61	51	60	58	46	49
Scotland Office	34	47	18	54	35	48	43	30	25
Wales Office	39	37	42	47	34	38	48	26	37

TABLE A2 continued

Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 July 2010

Government body	2010		2011				2012		
	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information †	16	13	12	10	7	11	-	-	-
Charity Commission	241	254	268	276	293	306	322	219	146
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission †	44	49	70	79	59	68	75	65	-
Crown Prosecution Service	124	107	104	100	132	117	162	141	171
Debt Management Office	15	11	18	11	11	12	17	15	9
Food Standards Agency	47	33	30	24	32	28	36	49	25
Health and Safety Executive	1,586	1,617	1,757	1,620	1,637	1,603	1,795	1,599	1,617
HM Land Registry	49	41	61	57	46	60	72	79	55
HM Revenue and Customs	403	459	429	461	461	443	611	501	447
National Archives	817	717	756	506	715	929	750	743	720
National Savings and Investments	27	22	26	29	24	23	30	25	17
Office for National Statistics	30	53	89	60	62	59	43	46	67
Office for Standards in Education	246	238	241	208	172	169	212	183	140
Office of Fair Trading	157	139	132	107	114	81	111	72	92
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	38	17	30	38	26	38	45	41	52
Office of Rail Regulation	33	52	47	42	41	95	44	39	39
Ordnance Survey	17	27	23	28	31	22	29	22	23
Royal Mint	3	5	4	4	5	4	5	16	4
Rural Payments Agency	83	84	105	101	118	97	118	121	117
Serious Fraud Office	33	25	24	26	22	15	25	36	21
Treasury Solicitor's Department	100	97	101	89	65	79	131	135	133
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	30	14	18	29	18	20	31	19	22

TABLE A3

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2012

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Timeliness of response			Percentage of requests meeting 20-day deadline	Percentage of requests 'in time' (i.e. meeting deadline or with permitted extension)
		20-day deadline met	Permitted extension ² to 20-day deadline	Late response (i.e. 20-day deadline missed)		
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	11,517	10,054	523	940	87%	92%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,646	6,514	389	743	85%	90%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,871	3,540	134	197	91%	95%
Departments of State						
Attorney General's Office	21	20	0	1	95%	95%
Cabinet Office #	357	275	58	24	77%	93%
Communities and Local Government	241	202	19	20	84%	92%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	247	224	20	3	91%	99%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	128	112	16	0	88%	100%
Department for Education	332	237	9	86	71%	74%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	147	125	11	11	85%	93%
Department for International Development	80	72	6	2	90%	98%
Department for Transport #	701	659	13	29	94%	96%
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,156	950	14	192	82%	83%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	147	124	17	6	84%	96%
Department of Health	430	427	3	0	99%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	9	7	0	2	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	279	207	60	12	74%	96%
HM Treasury #	713	664	44	5	93%	99%
Home Office #	973	756	58	159	78%	84%
Ministry of Defence #	817	669	37	111	82%	86%
Ministry of Justice #	757	694	0	63	92%	92%
Northern Ireland Office	49	46	1	2	94%	96%
Scotland Office	25	24	1	0	96%	100%
Wales Office	37	20	2	15	54%	59%

TABLE A3 continued

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2012

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Timeliness of response			Percentage of requests meeting 20-day deadline	Percentage of requests 'in time' (i.e. meeting deadline or with permitted extension)
		20-day deadline met	Permitted extension ² to 20-day deadline	Late response (i.e. 20-day deadline missed)		
Other bodies included in monitoring						
Charity Commission	146	132	0	14	90%	90%
Crown Prosecution Service	171	150	4	17	88%	90%
Debt Management Office	9	9	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	25	23	2	0	92%	100%
Health and Safety Executive	1,617	1,516	21	80	94%	95%
HM Land Registry	55	55	0	0	100%	100%
HM Revenue and Customs	447	401	2	44	90%	90%
National Archives ³	674	566	94	14	84%	98%
National Savings and Investments	17	17	0	0	*	*
Office for National Statistics	67	62	0	5	93%	93%
Office for Standards in Education	140	134	2	4	96%	97%
Office of Fair Trading	92	91	0	1	99%	99%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	52	44	4	4	85%	92%
Office of Rail Regulation	39	35	2	2	90%	95%
Ordnance Survey	23	23	0	0	100%	100%
Royal Mint	4	3	0	1	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	117	115	2	0	98%	100%
Serious Fraud Office	21	16	0	5	76%	76%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	133	127	0	6	95%	95%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	22	21	1	0	95%	100%

Notes

1 - Requests 'on hold' or 'lapsed' are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received. These requests are effectively suspended since public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made. They are therefore excluded from the calculation of timeliness measures.

2 - Permitted extensions include: extensions under the FOI Act to allow for consideration of the balance of the public interest, and extensions under the EIR because of the complexity or volume of the request.

3 - Although the standard statutory deadline for responding to an information request is 20 working days, a 30-day deadline applies where requests relate wholly or partly to archived information. The National Archives' timeliness figures are therefore reported on this basis.

TABLE A4

Percentage of non-routine information requests received since 1 July 2010 that were answered 'in time', by quarter

Government body	Percentage of non-routine information requests that were answered 'in time' ¹								
	2010		2011				2012		
	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	92%	92%	91%	90%	93%	93%	94%	93%	92%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	90%	89%	88%	88%	92%	92%	93%	92%	90%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	96%	95%	96%	94%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	100%	100%	100%	98%	100%	100%	96%	100%	95%
Cabinet Office #	85%	77%	42%	55%	85%	92%	93%	92%	93%
Communities and Local Government	97%	96%	96%	93%	92%	96%	94%	96%	92%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	96%	93%	93%	83%	88%	93%	93%	98%	99%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	99%	97%	99%	100%	100%	99%	98%	100%	100%
Department for Education	69%	69%	72%	87%	81%	75%	78%	84%	74%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	94%	94%	91%	92%	93%	84%	91%	92%	93%
Department for International Development	98%	95%	98%	99%	98%	98%	100%	99%	98%
Department for Transport #	92%	89%	92%	91%	93%	92%	95%	96%	96%
Department for Work and Pensions #	96%	97%	98%	95%	96%	93%	89%	85%	83%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	91%	89%	89%	91%	87%	97%	95%	97%	96%
Department of Health	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	*	78%	69%	*	100%	93%	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	90%	93%	95%	94%	92%	95%	91%	91%	96%
Government Equalities Office †	97%	84%	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-
HM Treasury #	99%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	99%	95%	99%
Home Office #	88%	90%	95%	96%	96%	88%	93%	89%	84%
Ministry of Defence #	66%	71%	76%	81%	84%	85%	89%	90%	86%
Ministry of Justice #	89%	88%	84%	75%	86%	91%	92%	92%	92%
Northern Ireland Office	100%	98%	97%	98%	96%	87%	67%	87%	96%
Scotland Office	100%	98%	*	98%	100%	98%	98%	93%	100%
Wales Office	92%	97%	90%	83%	97%	95%	96%	85%	59%

TABLE A4 continued

Percentage of non-routine information requests received since 1 July 2010 that were answered 'in time', by quarter

Government body	Percentage of non-routine information requests that were answered 'in time' ¹								
	2010		2011				2012		
	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information [†]	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	-
Charity Commission	98%	93%	97%	91%	94%	95%	97%	95%	90%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission [†]	100%	96%	99%	100%	98%	99%	97%	98%	-
Crown Prosecution Service	95%	98%	93%	92%	89%	90%	97%	93%	90%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	94%	97%	100%	100%	97%	96%	100%	98%	100%
Health and Safety Executive	93%	93%	93%	94%	95%	94%	94%	94%	95%
HM Land Registry	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	97%	100%
HM Revenue and Customs	91%	92%	94%	92%	90%	92%	92%	92%	90%
National Archives ²	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	98%
National Savings and Investments	100%	95%	100%	93%	100%	91%	100%	96%	*
Office for National Statistics	100%	100%	100%	78%	84%	86%	95%	83%	93%
Office for Standards in Education	100%	100%	100%	99%	98%	98%	100%	99%	97%
Office of Fair Trading	97%	96%	95%	98%	96%	96%	98%	100%	99%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	89%	*	90%	87%	92%	89%	91%	88%	92%
Office of Rail Regulation	97%	98%	96%	100%	95%	98%	86%	92%	95%
Ordnance Survey	*	100%	91%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	98%	99%	100%	93%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Serious Fraud Office	100%	92%	92%	100%	55%	*	92%	86%	76%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	100%	99%	99%	99%	100%	99%	98%	99%	95%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	97%	*	*	86%	*	*	94%	*	100%

Notes

1 - A request is 'in time' if it was answered within the statutory response deadline, or within a permitted extension to this deadline. Permitted extensions include extensions under the FOI Act to allow for consideration of the balance of the public interest, and extensions under the EIR because of the complexity or volume of the request. Requests 'on hold' or 'lapsed' are excluded from the calculation of timeliness measures. These requests are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received and so public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made.

2 - Although the standard statutory deadline for responding to an information request is 20 working days, a 30-day deadline applies where requests relate wholly or partly to archived information. The National Archives' timeliness figures are therefore reported on this basis.

TABLE A5

Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2012

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Requests where advice and assistance ² provided	Requests where information not held	Total 'resolvable' requests ³	Initial outcome of request				Percentage of resolvable requests granted in full	Percentage of resolvable requests withheld in full
					Granted in full	Partially withheld	Fully withheld ⁴	Response not yet provided ⁵		
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	11,517	720	2,157	8,640	4,548	1,257	2,417	418	53%	28%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,646	509	1,337	5,800	3,131	758	1,612	299	54%	28%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,871	211	820	2,840	1,417	499	805	119	50%	28%
Departments of State										
Attorney General's Office	21	0	13	8	1	3	4	0	*	*
Cabinet Office #	357	45	91	221	64	19	113	25	29%	51%
Communities and Local Government	241	0	39	202	126	32	32	12	62%	16%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	247	9	72	166	76	40	44	6	46%	27%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	128	30	33	65	40	5	15	5	62%	23%
Department for Education	332	10	52	270	169	40	42	19	63%	16%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	147	10	28	109	64	31	11	3	59%	10%
Department for International Development	80	3	7	70	48	7	12	3	68.6%	17%
Department for Transport #	701	14	128	559	417	59	74	9	74.6%	13%
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,156	2	53	1,101	756	99	181	65	68.7%	16%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	147	12	32	103	34	30	36	3	33.0%	35%
Department of Health	430	11	151	268	124	28	116	0	46%	43%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	9	0	1	8	4	2	1	1	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	279	35	46	198	67	66	41	24	34%	21%
HM Treasury #	713	117	167	429	110	83	216	20	26%	50%
Home Office #	973	133	132	708	336	91	230	51	47%	32%
Ministry of Defence #	817	0	156	661	432	48	143	38	65%	22%
Ministry of Justice #	757	67	101	589	225	64	287	13	38%	49%
Northern Ireland Office	49	6	18	25	15	4	5	1	60%	20%
Scotland Office	25	5	4	16	13	2	1	0	*	*
Wales Office	37	0	13	24	10	5	8	1	42%	33%

TABLE A5 continued

Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2012

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Requests where advice and assistance ² provided	Requests where information not held	Total 'resolvable' requests ³	Initial outcome of request				Percentage of resolvable requests granted in full	Percentage of resolvable requests withheld in full
					Granted in full	Partially withheld	Fully withheld ⁴	Response not yet provided ⁵		
Other bodies included in monitoring										
Charity Commission	146	14	16	116	57	47	11	1	49%	9%
Crown Prosecution Service	171	9	26	136	63	8	60	5	46%	44%
Debt Management Office	9	0	0	9	8	1	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	25	0	3	22	12	7	3	0	55%	14%
Health and Safety Executive	1,617	51	582	984	482	213	266	23	49%	27%
HM Land Registry	55	0	9	46	44	2	0	0	96%	0%
HM Revenue and Customs	447	12	47	388	136	18	224	10	35%	58%
National Archives	674	75	55	544	310	39	121	74	57%	22%
National Savings and Investments	17	0	0	17	10	1	6	0	*	*
Office for National Statistics	67	1	18	48	40	1	7	0	83%	15%
Office for Standards in Education	140	5	16	119	44	37	38	0	37%	32%
Office of Fair Trading	92	15	2	75	22	15	38	0	29%	51%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	52	3	10	39	23	10	3	3	59%	8%
Office of Rail Regulation	39	6	9	24	12	8	3	1	50%	13%
Ordnance Survey	23	0	5	18	13	4	1	0	*	*
Royal Mint	4	0	0	4	2	2	0	0	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	117	18	11	88	66	10	11	1	75.0%	13%
Serious Fraud Office	21	0	2	19	8	1	9	1	*	*
Treasury Solicitor's Department	133	1	5	127	54	73	0	0	43%	0%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	22	1	4	17	11	2	4	0	*	*

Notes

1 - Requests 'on hold' or 'lapsed' are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received. These requests are effectively suspended since public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made.

2 - 'Advice and assistance' would be provided to a requester when the body 'reasonably requires further information in order to identify and locate the information requested'. See section 1(3) of the Freedom of Information Act for further details.

3 - 'Resolvable requests' are all those where it is possible to make a substantive decision on whether to release the requested information. They exclude requests which are 'lapsed' or 'on-hold', where the information was not held, and where it was necessary to provide advice and assistance since in each of these cases it would not have been possible to resolve the request in the form it was asked.

4 - 'Fully withheld' requests include those which were refused because it was estimated that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

5 - This table counts as 'resolvable' all requests where a response has not yet been provided. This assumption is likely to be generally true but may be incorrect in a small number of cases.

It should also be noted that requests where a response has not yet been provided are more likely to involve considerations which are complex and finely balanced. As a result, it cannot be assumed that these requests will be granted and refused in the same proportions as 'resolvable' requests in general.

TABLE A6

Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 July 2010¹

Government body	Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests that were granted in full								
	2010		2011				2012		
	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	56%	55%	54%	54%	56%	55%	53%	53%	53%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	57%	58%	53%	53%	56%	56%	52%	53%	54%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	53%	52%	56%	54%	55%	54%	54%	54%	50%
<i>Departments of State</i>									
Attorney General's Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	29%	*
Cabinet Office #	26%	26%	12%	23%	42%	30%	28%	19%	29%
Communities and Local Government	73%	64%	78%	76%	70%	71%	70%	71%	62%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	54%	53%	43%	32%	45%	43%	42%	42%	46%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	56%	72%	61%	61%	67%	70%	72%	82%	62%
Department for Education	68%	72%	66%	63%	57%	61%	66%	67%	63%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	70%	62%	65%	62%	65%	60%	62%	59%	59%
Department for International Development	68%	76%	61%	68%	70%	62%	75%	67%	69%
Department for Transport #	72%	72%	70%	77%	76%	77%	77%	69%	75%
Department for Work and Pensions #	63%	65%	63%	61%	64%	66%	65%	65%	69%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	48%	47%	45%	59%	39%	55%	36%	40%	33%
Department of Health	73%	71%	63%	69%	69%	76%	30%	42%	46%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	*	*	70%	*	*	68%	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	28%	39%	28%	21%	34%	32%	26%	20%	34%
Government Equalities Office †	93%	61%	*	-	-	-	-	-	-
HM Treasury #	60%	50%	54%	45%	45%	42%	37%	36%	26%
Home Office #	51%	54%	51%	51%	51%	49%	49%	44%	47%
Ministry of Defence #	58%	63%	57%	60%	60%	59%	65%	66%	65%
Ministry of Justice #	33%	31%	27%	26%	31%	37%	37%	40%	38%
Northern Ireland Office	68%	50%	*	71%	61%	77%	52%	50%	60%
Scotland Office	58%	44%	*	68%	62%	85%	77%	78%	*
Wales Office	73%	81%	38%	52%	*	*	*	*	42%

TABLE A6 continued

Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 July 2010¹

Government body	Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests that were granted in full								
	2010		2011				2012		
	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information †	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	-
Charity Commission	64%	60%	66%	67%	68%	64%	71%	61%	49%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission †	57%	61%	72%	71%	65%	78%	77%	72%	-
Crown Prosecution Service	51%	62%	52%	48%	45%	40%	44%	55%	46%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	32%	31%	63%	*	57%	*	48%	50%	55%
Health and Safety Executive	52%	51%	53%	52%	53%	52%	56%	52%	49%
HM Land Registry	91%	94%	76%	84%	92%	87%	92%	97%	96%
HM Revenue and Customs	47%	41%	48%	41%	45%	41%	40%	45%	35%
National Archives	48%	45%	62%	57%	57%	60%	61%	54%	57%
National Savings and Investments	46%	68%	76%	73%	91%	87%	70%	91%	*
Office for National Statistics	77%	91%	72%	78%	80%	74%	72%	97%	83%
Office for Standards in Education	61%	67%	63%	51%	43%	43%	46%	42%	37%
Office of Fair Trading	26%	24%	14%	19%	20%	20%	25%	27%	29%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	67%	*	43%	48%	*	57%	61%	51%	59%
Office of Rail Regulation	*	75%	61%	80%	76%	16%	54%	59%	50%
Ordnance Survey	*	65%	*	*	79%	*	*	*	*
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	78%	72%	58%	70%	63%	60%	73%	78%	75%
Serious Fraud Office	*	24%	*	*	*	*	*	66%	*
Treasury Solicitor's Department	49%	41%	35%	57%	68%	64%	46%	33%	43%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	*	*	*	*	*	*	12%	*	*

Note

1 - 'Resolvable requests' are all those where it would have been possible to provide a substantive response. They exclude requests which are 'lapsed' or 'on-hold', where the information was not held, and where it was necessary to provide advice and assistance to the requester, since in each of these cases it would not have been possible to resolve the request in the form it was asked.

TABLE A7

Exemptions and exceptions¹ applied by monitored bodies when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2012

Exemption / Exception ¹	Number of requests where exemption used		
	Departments of State only	Other monitored bodies	TOTAL
Total number of requests where one or more exemptions or exceptions were applied	1,516	1,151	2,667
Number of requests where each exemption (listed in Part II of Fol Act²) was applied			
S(22) - Information intended for future publication	162	20	182
S(23) - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters	47	2	49
S(24) - National security	52	1	53
S(26) - Defence	16	5	21
S(27) - International relations	66	3	69
S(28) - Relations within the United Kingdom	7	2	9
S(29) - The economy	6	1	7
S(30) - Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities	14	240	254
S(31) - Law enforcement	99	97	196
S(32) - Court records, etc	43	7	50
S(33) - Audit functions	1	3	4
S(34) - Parliamentary privilege	1	0	1
S(35) - Formulation of Government policy, etc	206	3	209
S(36) - Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs	101	8	109
S(37) - Communications with Her Majesty, etc and honours	9	1	10
S(38) - Health and Safety	25	23	48
S(39) - Environmental information	³	³	³
S(40) - Personal information	599	570	1,169
S(41) - Information provided in confidence	56	95	151
S(42) - Legal professional privilege	30	13	43
S(43) - Commercial interests	169	61	230
S(44) - Prohibitions on disclosure	20	160	180
Number of requests where each exception (listed in Part 3 of EIRs) was applied			
3(a) - Exempt personal data	40	18	58
4(b) - Manifestly unreasonable	18	7	25
4(c) - Too general	6	0	6
4(d) - Work in progress / incomplete data	11	0	11
4(e) - Internal communications	42	0	42
5(a) - Adverse effect on international relations, defence, national security, public safety	8	5	13
5(b) - Adverse effect on course of justice or conduct of enquiries	4	2	6
5(c) - Adverse effect on intellectual property rights	0	1	1
5(d) - Impinges on confidentiality of a public authority's work	3	1	4
5(e) - Impinges on confidentiality of commercial or industrial information	24	3	27
5(f) - Adverse effect on interests of person who provided the information	4	1	5
5(g) - Adverse effect on protection of environment to which information relates	1	0	1
Environmental Exceptions	161	38	199

Notes

1 - 'Exemptions' refers to the provisions in Part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act (and the similar 'exceptions' in Part 3 of the Environmental Information Regulations) which classify certain types of information as exempt from the release obligations. More than one exemption or exception can apply to a single information request.

2 - The exemption described in section 21 of the Act ('Information accessible ... by other means') is not listed here, because requests falling under this exemption do not meet the formal definition of a 'non-routine' request and therefore are not counted in these monitoring statistics.

3 - The exemption listed at section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act ('Environmental Information') effectively states that information requests which fall within the scope of the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) should be handled as these Regulations specify. Requests for environmental information which are refused should apply one of the EIR exceptions listed above.

Annex B: Important note on the scope and consistency of the statistics

Defining the scope of Freedom of Information monitoring

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI) states that (subject to certain conditions):

‘Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—

(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and

(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him’

Regulation 5 of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 states that (subject to certain conditions):

‘A public authority that holds environmental information shall make it available on request.’

Following their introduction on 1 January 2005, the above provisions apply to all relevant requests for information made to public authorities, no matter how routine and straightforward they may be.

Government departments supply large amounts of information, both on request and proactively, as an established and routine part of their business. This includes information released in the form of leaflets, correspondence exchanges, reports and other published material, and through websites and departmental FOI Publication Schemes. All information released on request is covered by the Freedom of Information Act. However, it would be both uninformative and fundamentally unfeasible to count all such activity in departmental Freedom of Information monitoring returns.

The statistics in this bulletin therefore relate only to **the ‘non-routine’ information requests** that government departments have received. Essentially, this means that departments’ statistics should only count those requests where:

1. it was necessary to take a considered view on how to handle the request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, and
2. departmental Freedom of Information officer(s) were informed of the request and logged it in their case management systems.

Defining a request

The full definition of an 'information request' for the purposes of inclusion in the Ministry of Justice's monitoring returns is shown below. This definition was circulated to members of the central government 'Freedom of Information Practitioners' Group' in November 2004.

'[An information request for monitoring purposes is one ...]

1. *Which meets the criteria in section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act and if the request falls under the Environmental Information Regulations it includes requests made in any form or context, including oral requests; **and***
2. *Which is a request for information that is not already reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means; **and***
 - (i) Which results in the release of one or more documents (in any media) or inclusion of extracts of documents in the information released; **or***
 - (ii) Results in information being withheld under an exemption or exception from the right of access (either the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations); **or***
 - (iii) The request is not processed because the department estimates the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit in accordance with section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act; **or***
 - (iv) The request is not processed because the department is relying on the provisions of section 14 of the Freedom of Information Act; **or***
 - (v) Where a search is made for information sought in the request and it is found that none is held.'*

Consistency of the statistics

It is necessary to apply a definition of this sort in order to set a clear boundary to the coverage of our monitoring, and thereby obtain meaningful information from the process. The definition shown above has been widely disseminated to Freedom of Information officers in government and we have tried to ensure that it is applied consistently across all monitored bodies.

However, there is considerable variation in the way these bodies are structured and managed, and in the mechanisms that they have put in place to meet their obligations under the Freedom of Information Act. For example, some bodies operate a centralised Freedom of Information secretariat that co-ordinates responses to all information requests received. Others give a greater degree of autonomy to individual work areas in the handing of information requests.

As a result of these differences, there could be a degree of inconsistency in the way in which bodies have interpreted and applied the definition of an 'information request' for monitoring purposes. However, the statistics

effectively count those requests which have been dealt with by each monitored body formally under the FOI Act. As such, the statistics report on how many such requests for information each monitored body has received and how they have implemented the Act's requirements in providing responses. Direct comparisons between the statistics for different monitored bodies can therefore be made on this basis.

In summary, it is important to note that:

- (i) These statistics only cover 'non-routine' information requests, and do not give a representative picture of all requests for information received in government.**
- (ii) There is likely to be a degree of inconsistency between monitored bodies' interpretations of the definition of an 'information request' for monitoring purposes. This should be borne in mind when using these statistics.**

Uses of the statistics

The main users of these statistics are departmental FOI teams responsible for coordinating responses and requests, Ministers and officials with responsibility for developing information access policy, and other non-governmental bodies with an interest in the accessibility of government information. The statistics are used to monitor the implementation of the FOI Act by central government, both as a whole and by each individual body included in the figures.

Annex C: Government bodies included in these statistics

The statistics in this bulletin have been derived from monitoring returns completed by Freedom of Information officers in government departments during November 2012. This is the latest set of quarterly Freedom of Information statistics to be published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the government department which now has lead responsibility for the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The first eight bulletins in this series were published by the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

The formal monitoring work covers a total of 41 government bodies, including all major departments of state (i.e. Ministerial departments).

The monitored bodies which are not departments of state nonetheless have significant policymaking, regulatory or information-handling functions. As far as possible, this list includes major non-Ministerial Government Departments (NMGDs) and excludes Executive Agencies, although these classifications are not mutually exclusive and periodic 'Machinery of Government' changes make it difficult to define the list precisely.

Coverage within the UK

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Office and the Wales Office are included in these statistics. However, we have not collected formal monitoring data from the National Assembly for Wales, or from the bodies that make up the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies in Scotland. This legislation lies outside the scope of the monitoring work on which this bulletin is based. However, the Scotland Office has been included here because, although it deals with matters relating to Scotland, it is based in England and hence falls under the scope of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 rather than the corresponding Scottish legislation.

The following is a full list of the bodies covered by the monitoring statistics in the third quarter of 2012.

Departments of State

Attorney General's Office
Cabinet Office
Communities and Local Government
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Department for Education
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for International Development
Department for Transport
Department for Work and Pensions
Department of Energy and Climate Change
Department of Health
Export Credits Guarantee Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
HM Treasury
Home Office
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Justice
Northern Ireland Office
Scotland Office
Wales Office

Other monitored bodies

Charity Commission
Crown Prosecution Service
Debt Management Office
Food Standards Agency
Health and Safety Executive and Commission
HM Land Registry
HM Revenue and Customs
National Archives
National Savings and Investments
Office for National Statistics
Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)
Office of Fair Trading
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)
Office of Rail Regulation
Ordnance Survey
Royal Mint
Rural Payments Agency
Serious Fraud Office
Treasury Solicitor's Department
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)

Notes

1. The following departmental changes occurred between the beginning of July 2010 and the end of September 2012, the period covered by the tables in this bulletin.

The **Government Equalities Office (GEO)** was created in October 2007. Figures for requests received by the GEO were included in the statistics for the first time in Q1 2010. Requests to the GEO were not included in the statistics up to and including Q4 2009. The GEO's inclusion should therefore be borne in mind when comparing 2010 data for the Departments of State and all monitored bodies groups with earlier quarters. However, the small volume of requests received by the GEO means that the GEO constitutes a very small proportion of the total requests received by these groups as a whole, and so direct comparisons with earlier quarters can still be made. Since June 2011, the GEO has sat within the Home Office, and so from Q2 2011 onwards figures for requests received by the Government Equalities Office requests have been included within the Home Office's statistics.

Since April 2012, the **Central Office of Information** has closed and all functions have been transferred to the Cabinet Office, and so from Q2 2012 onwards figures for requests received previously by the Central Office of Information have been included within the Cabinet Office's statistics.

The **Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (CMEC)** was abolished in July 2012 and its functions have been transferred to the Department of Work and Pensions. From Q3 2012 onwards requests received previously by CMEC have been included within the Department for Work and Pensions' statistics.

2. The figures provided by a number of Departments of State count the non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. The departments and agencies affected are shown below.

Cabinet Office

Figures include requests received by the following:

Requests that were addressed to 10 Downing Street
Central Office of Information

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills .

Figures include requests received by the following:

Met Office

Department for Transport

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

- Driving Standards Agency
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- Government Cars Despatch Agency
- Highways Agency
- Marine and Coastguard Agency
- Vehicle Certification Agency
- Vehicle and Operator Services Agency

Department for Work and Pensions

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

- Appeals Agency
- Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission
- Disability Carers Service
- Jobcentre plus
- Pension Service
- Rent Service

Department for Culture Media and Sport

Figures include requests received by the Royal Parks Agency.

HM Treasury

Figures include requests received by the Office for Budget Responsibility.

Home Office

From 2006 onwards, figures include requests received by the Criminal Records Bureau, the Borders and Immigration Agency, and the UK Passport Service. The latter agency was absorbed within the Identity and Passport Service from 1 April 2006. Previously-supplied figures for the year 2005 only included requests received by the Home Office itself. Figures for Q2 2011 onwards include requests received by the Government Equalities Office.

Ministry of Defence

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

- Defence Support Group (DSG)
- Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl)
- UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO).

Ministry of Justice

Figures include requests received by HM Courts and Tribunals Service where they were referred to the department's Data Access and Compliance Unit.

Annex D: Explanatory notes

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The statistics in this bulletin relate to the handling by central government bodies of information requests received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs). They are collected and published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), with assistance from Freedom of Information officers across central government.

The FOI Act received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000. Under the Act, anybody may request information from a public authority which has functions in England, Wales and/or Northern Ireland. The Act confers two statutory rights on applicants:

- To be told whether or not the public authority holds that information; and if so,
- To have that information communicated to them.

These statutory rights came into force on 1 January 2005. The MoJ is the lead department responsible for the FOI Act. Further information is available at:

www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/freedom-and-rights/freedom-of-information/index.htm

The (amended) EIRs also came into force on 1 January 2005, to coincide with the FOI Act. They clarify and extend previous rights to environmental information held by public authorities. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is the lead department responsible for the EIRs. Further information is available from their website at:

<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/corporate/policy/opengov/eir/>

These statistics are derived from monitoring returns submitted to MoJ in November 2012. They relate to information requests received during the period 1 July to 30 September 2012. The collection of monitoring data began on the 21st working day after the last day of this period (i.e. on 29th October 2012), since 20 working days is the statutory deadline for public authorities to respond to information requests under both the FOI Act and the EIRs.

Only 'non-routine' information requests are counted in these statistics. Important notes on the scope and consistency of these statistics are given in Annex B.

These statistics cover a total of 41 central government bodies. At the commencement of the Act in January 2005 there were 43 bodies covered by the monitoring statistics, but the precise number can change from time to time due to 'Machinery of Government' changes. A full list of the monitored bodies in Q3 2012 is shown in Annex C.

Contacts

Press enquires on the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act in a particular government body should be addressed to that body's Press Office.

Press enquiries on the contents of this bulletin should be directed to the Ministry of Justice press office:

Becky Dearden
Tel: 020 3334 3528
Email: Becky.dearden@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

Daniel Kessler
Justice Statistics Analytical Services
Ministry of Justice
7th Floor
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ
Tel: 020 3334 5324
Email: statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Other queries about the Freedom of Information Act 2000 should be directed to:

Information Directorate
Ministry of Justice
6th Floor
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ
Tel: 020 3334 3625
Email: informationrights@justice.gsi.gov.uk

General enquiries about the statistical work of the Ministry of Justice can be e-mailed to: statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from www.statistics.gov.uk

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statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk