



Freedom of Information Statistics: Development Plan

April 2021

Quarterly and annual statistics on the Implementation of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) in central government have been published since the FOIA came into force. Responsibility for the production of these National Statistics transferred from the Ministry of Justice to the Cabinet Office in October 2015.

Cabinet Office are committed to the ongoing review and improvement of Freedom of Information statistics, to ensure that they are of the highest quality and public value. As part of this commitment, Cabinet Office will publish ongoing development plans, setting out intended areas for improvement. Freedom of Information statistics are designated National Statistics in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality, and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment from the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. FOI statistics were most recently assessed by the Authority during 2016, with continuing designation granted in June 2017.

Communication with data supply partners

What we have done

- Released a questionnaire for all FOI data suppliers to allow us to develop a clear understanding of the departmental processes involved in the production of FOI statistics.
- As requested in supplier feedback we considered setting up an email list for notifications of the publication of the FOI statistics. After gauging interest from departments, this will not be implemented due to the majority being content with current levels and methods of communication in terms of publication notification.
- Circulated terms of reference for a data supplier forum in order to come to consensus on the topics to be addressed and areas of interest.
- Held a Data Supplier Forum to promote closer communication, resource pooling and good-practice sharing between departmental data suppliers.
- Received feedback from the Data Supplier Forum that will help shape our statistics going forward.

What we will do

Timescale

- Continue updating guidance on how to use the Cabinet Office FOI statistics data collection template for suppliers, as appropriate. Ongoing
- Consider the range of feedback received through the data supplier forum and how to take forward the issues raised, working closely with suppliers as appropriate. Ongoing

- Start planning for the next forum. Ongoing

User Engagement

What we have done

- Review feedback on an ongoing basis and publish feedback and associated actions in a FOI statistical work programme.
- Survey known users for feedback on the changes made to the annual bulletin incorporating previous feedback in order to identify future areas for development.
- Based on user feedback we have introduced new measures for 'outcomes' to ensure that the 'outcomes' continue to provide an accurate reflection of FOI performance across government.
- Based on user feedback we have changed our approach to reporting complaints to the ICO and how we present these statistics.

What we will do

Timescale

- Continue to consult with users and stakeholders on the recording of PIT extensions and ICO appeals. Ongoing

Narrative and public value

What we will do

- Review feedback on the updates to the format of the annual and quarterly bulletin in order to identify areas for improvement. Ongoing
- Explore options for interactive presentation of data using formats such as Tableau and D3 in order to enhance the usability of the data. Ongoing
- Maintain the FOI statistics QMI document and update it as appropriate.
- We have improved our approach to the presentation of data tables for the quarterly and annual statistics.