



Ministry
of Justice



Freedom of Information Statistics: Implementation in Central Government

July - September 2013

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

Published 12 December 2013



Executive summary

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows individuals to request information from public bodies. This bulletin presents statistics for its use in relation to non-routine requests for information received by 41 central government bodies, i.e. 21 Departments of State and 20 'other monitored bodies', in the third quarter of 2013 (July-September).

Number of requests [see Tables A1 & A2]

In the third quarter of 2013 monitored central government bodies received a total of 13,370 non-routine Freedom of Information Act (FOI) requests. This is 6% more than the number received in Q2 2013, and a 16% increase from Q3 2012, consistent with a trend of increasing use of the FOI Act.

Between Q3 2006 and Q3 2013 the number of FOI requests recorded by monitored bodies increased by 63%. The increase has been driven by requests to Departments of State.

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

92% of requests received during Q3 2013 received a response within the statutory deadline or were responded to within a permitted deadline extension, 2 percentage points higher than the previous quarter and a fall of less than one percentage point since Q3 2012. Across all monitored bodies between 64% and 100% of requests received a response 'on time'.

Initial outcomes of requests [see Tables A5 & A6]

Of all requests received during Q3 2013 where it was possible to make a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought ('resolvable requests'), 55% were granted in full and 28% were withheld in full. The remainder were granted in part or the response has not yet been provided.

The percentage of resolvable requests granted in full has risen by 2 percentage points from 53% in Q2 2013, and risen by 2 percentage points from Q3 2012.

Exemptions and exceptions [see Table A7]

In Q3 2013, one or more exemption or exception was applied to 2,852 requests, which is 28% of all resolvable requests. The most common exemption, as in previous quarters, was section 40 (personal data). Section 40 was used in 49% of exempt requests.

Please note Annex E, which proposes changes to this publication.

Table of Contents

<u>Executive Summary</u>	p. 3
<u>Introduction</u>	p. 5
<u>Results:</u>	
<u>Number of Requests</u>	p. 6
<u>Timeliness of Response</u>	p. 7
<u>Outcomes of Requests</u>	p. 8
<u>Use of Exemptions and Exceptions</u>	p. 9
<u>Annex A: Statistical Tables</u>	p. 11
<u>Annex B: Note on scope and consistency</u>	p. 25
<u>Annex C: List of Government Bodies</u>	p. 28
<u>Annex D: Correction to Previous Editions</u>	p. 32
<u>Annex E: Planned upcoming changes to Bulletin</u>	p. 33
<u>Annex F: Explanatory notes</u>	p. 34
<u>Contacts</u>	p. 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 statistics on their implementation within central government for the quarterly period July to September 2013 (with tables in Annex A covering the period from Q3 2011 until Q3 2013).

The previous quarterly and annual bulletins, together covering the period from January 2005 to June 2013, are available via the links on the following pages of the Ministry of Justice and National Archives websites:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/series/government-foi-statistics

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. Requests for information that is already reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means should not be included in this publication. Annex B gives a definition of a non-routine request, and other information on the scope of these statistics. The number of 'routine' information requests is not known, therefore figures in this publication should be considered a lower bound for all information requests received by the monitored bodies.

FOIA applies to over 100,000 public bodies¹, including all local authorities and schools. FOI requests submitted to the 41 monitored bodies covered in this bulletin represent an unknown fraction of the total volume of FOI requests made to all public bodies.

This bulletin presents monitoring statistics for a total of 41 central government bodies, including all major Departments of State. Annex C gives a full list of monitored bodies². Over 100,000 bodies are subject to the FOI Act³ and a substantial number of FOI requests are sent to those which are non-monitored. The trends which apply to monitored central government bodies cannot be assumed to apply to all those bodies subject to The Act.

More information regarding EIRs is available via the link below.

¹www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo060725/text/60725w0081.htm#06072811011026

² 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.

³www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo060725/text/60725w0081.htm#06072811011026

Departmental changes

Please refer to Annex C for full details of departmental changes and the inclusion and exclusion of subordinate agencies that have occurred since Q3 2011, the period covered by the tables in this bulletin.

Results

Number of requests [see Tables A1 & A2]

In July to September (Q3) 2013 the monitored central government bodies received a total of 13,370 non-routine FOI (Freedom of Information Act) requests, 16% more than in Q3 of 2012 and 6% more than Q2 2013. In the first three quarters of 2013 there have been a total of 39,749 requests, which is 6.5% more than during the first three quarters of 2012.

Figure 1 shows that, despite considerable quarter-on-quarter variation, there has been a generally increasing trend in the number of requests received over the past five years.

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

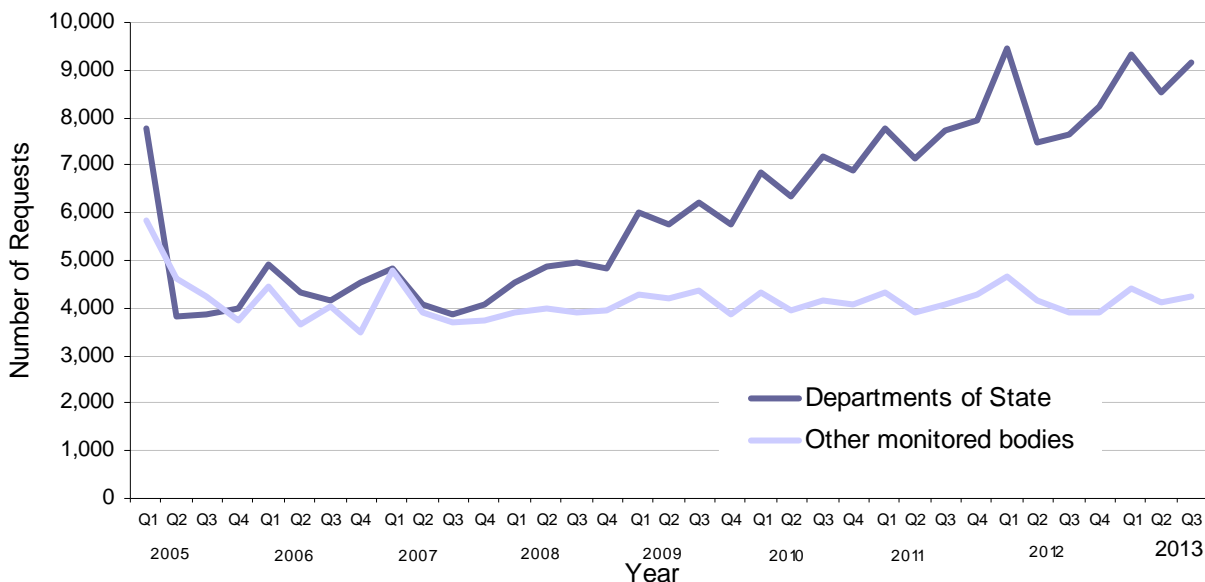


Figure 1 shows that the increase in requests over the past 5 years has been driven by an increase in those received by Departments of State. Departments of State reported receiving a total of 9,145 information requests in Q3 2013, 20% more than Q3 2012 and 7% more than in Q2 2013. Other monitored bodies reported having received 4,225 requests, an increase of 8% from Q3 2012 and a rise of 2% from Q2 2013.

Departments of State accounted for 68% of all requests received by monitored bodies in Q3 of 2013. This is an increase of 2 percentage points since Q3 2012 (66%) and 21 percentage points since Q3 2005 (48%).

Of the Departments of State, the Department for Work and Pensions reported having received 1,513 requests during Q3 2013, the highest departmental total. The other departments that received more than 1,000 requests were the Department for Transport with 1,074 and the Ministry of Justice with 1,038. The departments with the biggest increases since Q3 2012 were the Department for Transport who received 373 (53%) more requests in Q3 2013 than Q3 2012, the Department for Work and Pensions who received 357 (31%) more requests in Q3 2013 than Q3 2012 and the Ministry of Justice who received 281 (37%) more requests in Q3 2013 than Q3 2012.

Among other monitored bodies, the Health and Safety Executive reported having received 1,417 requests during Q3, while the National Archives received 902. These two bodies combined account for over 55% of all requests received by all the other monitored bodies. Therefore the trends for the other monitored bodies group as a whole are heavily dependant on the trends for these two particular bodies.

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. This is partly due to the nature of requests it receives: a large percentage are from solicitors representing an injured party, seeking disclosure of information collected during an investigation of a workplace incident.

Monitoring statistics also show the number of non-routine information requests that fell fully or mostly under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs). There were 500 such requests during the third quarter of 2013, accounting for 4% of all requests received. The number of requests handled under EIR is up 13% on the previous quarter and 16% on Q3 2012.

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

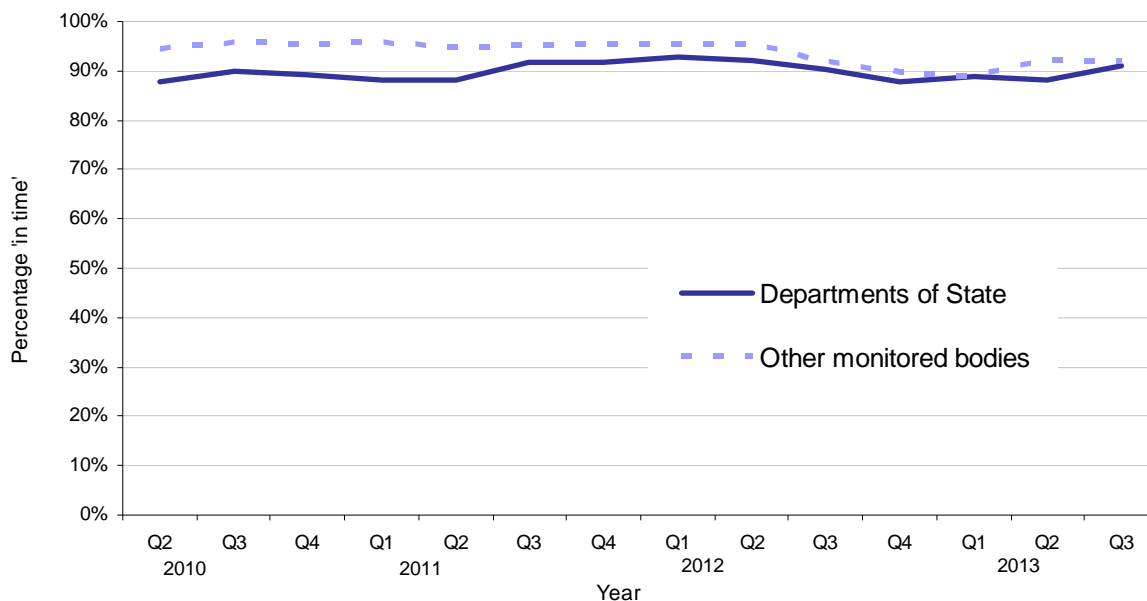
Timeliness statistics give a measure of how well monitored bodies are complying with the Act. The FOI Act requires most public bodies to respond to written requests for information within 20 working days of receipt. There are limited exceptions to this deadline. It does not apply to requests subject to the consideration of public interest, which have no statutory deadline. A 30 working 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% of requests received during Q3 of 2013 were sent a response within the 20 (or 30 for the National Archives) working day deadline – this is an increase of 3 percentage points since Q2 2013 and a very small increase of less than one percentage point since Q3 of 2012. 92% of the requests received during Q3 of 2013 were handled ‘in time’, in that they either received a response within the standard deadline or were subject to a permitted deadline extension. This is an increase of 2 percentage points from Q2 2013, but a decrease of less than one percentage point since Q3 2012.

Comparing across all monitored bodies between 60% and 100% of requests received during Q3 of 2013 were responded to within the 20 day deadline, whilst between 64% and 100% of requests received in the same period were responded to 'in time'.

Figure 2 shows that despite the rise in requests, average timeliness for monitored bodies has been above 87% for the last three years. It also illustrates that other monitored bodies are, on average, timelier than Departments of State.

Figure 2: Percentage of FOI requests replied to 'in time' by Departments of State and other monitored bodies by quarter from Q2 2010



Initial outcomes of requests [see Tables A5 & A6]

It may not be possible for a monitored body to resolve a request in full if the information sought is not held, further information is needed to be able to answer a request, or because a fee has been requested but has not been paid. Of the 13,370 requests reported during Q3 of 2013 across all monitored bodies, the following were not resolvable:

- 50 were 'on hold' awaiting a fee payment;
- 2,411 requests sought information that was not held;
- 769 were responded to with 'advice and assistance' because the body handling the request needed further information in order to identify the information being sought. If the requester provided appropriate information, the request is considered resolvable.

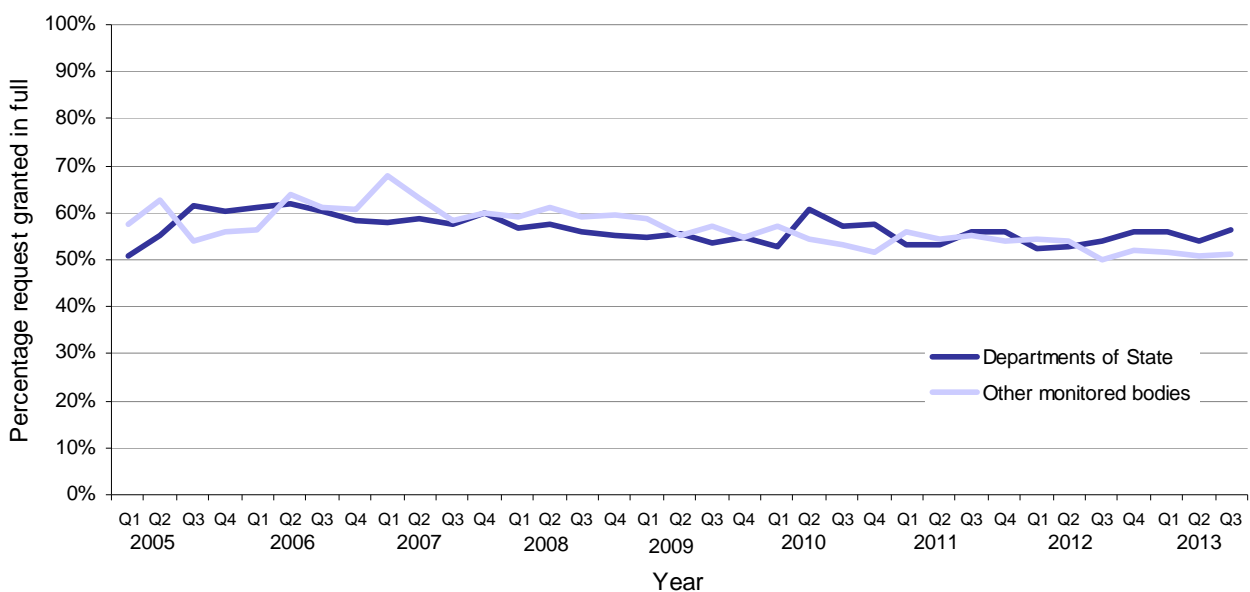
As a result, the remaining 10,083 (75%) requests were assumed to be 'resolvable', in that it would have been possible to give a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought.

Of the 'resolvable' requests received during Q3 of 2013,

- 55% (5,532) were granted in full, up from 53% (4,548) in Q3 2012 and 53% (5,016) in Q2 2013
- 12% (1,235) were withheld in part, down from 15% (1,257) in Q3 2012 and 13% (1,180) in Q2 of 2013
- 28% (2,868) were withheld in full, up from 28% (2,417) in Q3 2012, and 28% (2,616) in Q2 of 2013
- The remainder (4%, 448) had not been answered by the end of the quarter

Figure 3 shows that the proportion of requests granted in full has stayed fairly constant since the act was introduced; with a very slight downwards trend over time. However, from the second to the third quarter of 2013 there was an increase of 2 percentage points in requests granted in full by Departments of State and an increase of less than one percentage point for those granted in full by other monitored bodies. This shows that there is still fluctuation in the figures shown from quarter to quarter.

Figure 3: Percentage of resolvable requests granted in full, Q1 2005 – Q3 2013



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, or if the information falls in one or more of the categories of exempt information ('exemptions') listed in Part II of the Act⁴. Similar arrangements apply to certain types of information under the EIRs.

⁴ A summary of all exemptions can be found at: www.justice.gov.uk/information-access-rights/foi-guidance-for-practitioners/exemptions-guidance

Across all monitored bodies, a total of 2,852 requests (28% of resolvable requests) were reported as having one or more of these exemptions or exceptions applied to them during Q3. This means that government has the requested information, but withheld some or all of it under an exemption listed in the Act.

The most commonly applied exemptions or exceptions in Q3 2013 were:

- Section 40 of the FOI Act (relating to personal information), which was applied to 1,399 requests, and in 49% of all exempt requests;
- Section 22 (Information intended for future publication), which was applied to 234 requests and in 8% of all exempt requests.
- Section 31 (Law Enforcement), which was applied to 228 requests and in 8% of all exempt requests.
- Section 43 (Commercial Interests), which was applied to 206 requests and in 7% of all exempt requests.
- Section 44 (Prohibitions on disclosure), which was applied to 200 requests and in 7% of all exempt requests.

These exemptions are typically among the most frequent exemptions used since The Act came into force. Some exemptions were not used at all by any of the 41 monitored bodies, for example section 34 (parliamentary privilege).

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 2013, 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 2011</i>
Table A3	<i>Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July – 30 September 2013</i>
Table A4	<i>Proportion of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were answered 'in time', by quarter, since 1 July 2011</i>
Table A5	<i>Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July – 30 September 2013</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 2011</i>
Table A7	<i>Exemptions and exceptions applied by monitored bodies when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 July – 30 September 2013</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 2013, and their status at time of monitoring

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring			
		Processed	On hold ¹ or lapsed ¹	Still being processed	Number handled under EIRs ²
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	13,370	12,872	50	448	500
TOTAL for Departments of State only	9,145	8,807	0	338	275
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,225	4,065	50	110	225
<i>Departments of State</i>					
Attorney General's Office	78	78	0	0	0
Cabinet Office #	405	355	0	50	0
Communities and Local Government	208	195	0	13	27
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	298	289	0	9	8
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	138	134	0	4	0
Department for Education	390	378	0	12	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	243	238	0	5	107
Department for International Development	127	126	0	1	11
Department for Transport #	1,074	1,061	0	13	38
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,513	1,499	0	14	1
Department of Energy and Climate Change	207	201	0	6	80
Department of Health	514	514	0	0	0
Export Credits Guarantee Department	32	32	0	0	0
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	293	257	0	36	0
HM Treasury #	642	619	0	23	0
Home Office #	893	825	0	68	0
Ministry of Defence #	904	862	0	42	2
Ministry of Justice #	1,038	999	0	39	1
Northern Ireland Office	60	59	0	1	0
Scotland Office	41	39	0	2	0
Wales Office	47	47	0	0	0

TABLE A1 continued

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2013 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
<i>Other bodies included in monitoring</i>					
Charity Commission	158	157	0	1	0
Crown Prosecution Service	165	144	0	21	0
Debt Management Office	15	15	0	0	0
Food Standards Agency	40	40	0	0	0
Health and Safety Executive #	1,417	1,380	1	36	72
HM Land Registry	93	93	0	0	0
HM Revenue and Customs	554	549	0	5	4
National Archives	902	817	49	36	0
National Savings and Investments	43	43	0	0	0
Office for National Statistics	84	84	0	0	0
Office for Standards in Education	186	184	0	2	0
Office of Fair Trading	87	87	0	0	0
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	74	72	0	2	24
Office of Rail Regulation	62	60	0	2	0
Ordnance Survey	35	35	0	0	0
Royal Mint	5	5	0	0	0
Rural Payments Agency	136	131	0	5	125
Serious Fraud Office	37	37	0	0	0
Treasury Solicitor's Department	56	56	0	0	0
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	76	76	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 2011

Government body	Number of non-routine information requests received								
	2011		2012				2013		
	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	11,829	12,221	14,116	11,634	11,563	12,159	13,712	12,667	13,370
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,738	7,942	9,452	7,468	7,646	8,251	9,312	8,536	9,145
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,091	4,279	4,664	4,166	3,917	3,908	4,400	4,131	4,225
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	36	44	49	48	21	43	53	64	78
Cabinet Office #	426	509	492	378	357	378	452	466	405
Communities and Local Government	242	230	179	168	241	193	247	212	208
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	273	229	299	231	247	232	227	238	298
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	161	177	184	185	128	122	136	134	138
Department for Education	289	287	349	313	332	315	476	454	390
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	166	164	200	179	147	170	176	170	243
Department for International Development	125	125	117	106	80	105	106	114	127
Department for Transport #	812	778	892	713	701	836	873	693	1,074
Department for Work and Pensions #	937	927	1,326	1,005	1,156	1,282	1,457	1,356	1,513
Department of Energy and Climate Change	131	159	216	144	147	197	168	154	207
Department of Health	478	433	1,077	417	430	483	567	524	514
Export Credits Guarantee Department	18	21	27	18	9	10	27	29	32
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	292	348	390	336	279	332	285	338	293
HM Treasury #	654	688	759	624	713	679	779	689	642
Home Office #	813	867	923	900	973	1,110	1,129	884	893
Ministry of Defence #	930	877	914	844	817	853	940	816	904
Ministry of Justice #	835	933	910	757	757	781	1,083	1,103	1,038
Northern Ireland Office	51	60	58	46	49	53	56	41	60
Scotland Office	35	48	43	30	25	40	41	34	41
Wales Office	34	38	48	26	37	37	34	23	47

TABLE A2 continued

Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 July 2011

Government body	Number of non-routine information requests received								
	2011		2012				2013		
	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 †	7	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charity Commission	293	306	322	219	146	127	173	151	158
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission †	59	68	75	65	-	-	-	-	-
Crown Prosecution Service	132	117	162	141	171	142	181	160	165
Debt Management Office	11	12	17	15	9	6	13	25	15
Food Standards Agency	32	28	36	49	25	34	98	44	40
Health and Safety Executive #	1,637	1,603	1,795	1,599	1,617	1,641	1,657	1,447	1,417
HM Land Registry	46	60	72	79	55	88	98	133	93
HM Revenue and Customs	461	443	611	501	447	524	518	518	554
National Archives	715	929	750	743	720	643	864	861	902
National Savings and Investments	24	23	30	25	17	21	30	16	43
Office for National Statistics	62	59	43	46	67	71	73	61	84
Office for Standards in Education	172	169	212	183	140	162	166	172	186
Office of Fair Trading	114	81	111	72	92	105	96	85	87
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	26	38	45	41	52	64	56	67	74
Office of Rail Regulation	41	95	44	39	39	31	45	58	62
Ordnance Survey	31	22	29	22	23	17	15	16	35
Royal Mint	5	4	5	16	4	4	5	1	5
Rural Payments Agency	118	97	118	121	117	99	109	131	136
Serious Fraud Office	22	15	25	36	21	37	28	46	37
Treasury Solicitor's Department	65	79	131	135	133	66	141	85	56
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	18	20	31	19	22	26	34	54	76

TABLE A3

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2013

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	13,320	11,644	560	1,116	87.4%	91.6%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	9,145	7,864	453	828	86.0%	90.9%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,175	3,780	107	288	90.5%	93.1%
<i>Departments of State</i>						
Attorney General's Office	78	70	4	4	89.7%	94.9%
Cabinet Office #	405	302	43	60	74.6%	85.2%
Communities and Local Government	208	164	21	23	78.8%	88.9%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	298	268	17	13	89.9%	95.6%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	138	123	9	6	89.1%	95.7%
Department for Education	390	334	6	50	85.6%	87.2%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	243	212	30	1	87.2%	99.6%
Department for International Development	127	114	10	3	89.8%	97.6%
Department for Transport #	1,074	1,008	19	47	93.9%	95.6%
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,513	1,415	11	87	93.5%	94.2%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	207	188	16	3	90.8%	98.6%
Department of Health	514	512	2	0	99.6%	100.0%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	32	30	0	2	93.8%	93.8%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	293	187	71	35	63.8%	88.1%
HM Treasury #	642	575	44	23	89.6%	96.4%
Home Office #	893	534	108	251	59.8%	71.9%
Ministry of Defence #	904	770	36	98	85.2%	89.2%
Ministry of Justice #	1,038	915	4	119	88.2%	88.5%
Northern Ireland Office	60	58	0	2	96.7%	96.7%
Scotland Office	41	38	2	1	92.7%	97.6%
Wales Office	47	47	0	0	100.0%	100.0%

TABLE A3 continued

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2013

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	158	149	1	8	94.3%	94.9%
Crown Prosecution Service	165	105	0	60	63.6%	63.6%
Debt Management Office	15	15	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	40	33	6	1	82.5%	97.5%
Health and Safety Executive #	1,416	1,275	24	117	90.0%	91.7%
HM Land Registry	93	93	0	0	100.0%	100.0%
HM Revenue and Customs	554	509	1	44	91.9%	92.1%
National Archives ³	853	781	58	14	91.6%	98.4%
National Savings and Investments	43	41	0	2	95.3%	95.3%
Office for National Statistics	84	82	0	2	97.6%	97.6%
Office for Standards in Education	186	174	6	6	93.5%	96.8%
Office of Fair Trading	87	80	0	7	92.0%	92.0%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	74	64	0	10	86.5%	86.5%
Office of Rail Regulation	62	53	6	3	85.5%	95.2%
Ordnance Survey	35	35	0	0	100.0%	100.0%
Royal Mint	5	4	1	0	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	136	126	2	8	92.6%	94.1%
Serious Fraud Office	37	32	2	3	86.5%	91.9%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	56	56	0	0	100.0%	100.0%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	76	73	0	3	96.1%	96.1%

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 2011 that were answered 'in time', by quarter

Government body	Percentage of non-routine information requests that were answered 'in time' ¹								
	2011		2012				2013		
	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	92.9%	93.0%	93.7%	93.1%	91.8%	89.7%	89.0%	89.3%	91.6%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	91.9%	91.7%	92.9%	91.9%	90.3%	87.9%	89.0%	88.1%	90.9%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	94.8%	95.4%	95.4%	95.2%	91.8%	89.7%	89.0%	92.0%	91.6%
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	100.0%	100.0%	95.9%	100.0%	95.2%	97.7%	100.0%	96.9%	94.9%
Cabinet Office #	84.5%	91.7%	93.1%	91.5%	93.3%	95.2%	86.3%	83.5%	85.2%
Communities and Local Government	91.7%	95.7%	94.4%	95.8%	91.7%	90.7%	86.6%	92.0%	88.9%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	88.3%	93.4%	93.0%	98.3%	98.8%	95.7%	96.5%	99.2%	95.6%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	100.0%	99.4%	97.8%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.3%	97.0%	95.7%
Department for Education	81.0%	74.9%	77.9%	84.0%	74.1%	82.2%	89.1%	87.4%	87.2%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	92.8%	83.5%	91.0%	92.2%	92.5%	96.5%	88.6%	89.4%	99.6%
Department for International Development	97.6%	98.4%	100.0%	99.1%	97.5%	99.0%	99.1%	99.1%	97.6%
Department for Transport #	92.9%	92.3%	94.7%	96.5%	95.9%	95.3%	95.8%	96.4%	95.6%
Department for Work and Pensions #	96.3%	93.3%	89.1%	85.2%	83.4%	79.5%	91.7%	94.7%	94.2%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	87.0%	96.9%	95.4%	97.2%	95.9%	95.9%	97.0%	96.1%	98.6%
Department of Health	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.8%	100.0%	99.6%	99.6%	99.4%	100.0%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	100.0%	92.6%	*	*	*	77.8%	65.5%	93.8%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	92.5%	95.1%	91.0%	91.4%	95.7%	93.4%	95.4%	88.5%	88.1%
HM Treasury #	98.2%	97.7%	98.7%	94.6%	99.3%	96.5%	97.9%	95.8%	96.4%
Home Office #	95.8%	88.0%	93.5%	89.4%	83.7%	71.6%	50.4%	52.8%	71.9%
Ministry of Defence #	84.4%	84.7%	89.4%	90.0%	86.4%	86.5%	83.8%	86.6%	89.2%
Ministry of Justice #	86.5%	90.9%	91.9%	92.2%	91.7%	89.6%	90.2%	88.1%	88.5%
Northern Ireland Office	96.1%	86.7%	67.2%	87.0%	95.9%	98.1%	96.4%	97.6%	96.7%
Scotland Office	100.0%	97.9%	97.7%	93.3%	100.0%	90.0%	95.1%	100.0%	97.6%
Wales Office	97.1%	94.7%	95.8%	84.6%	59.5%	86.5%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

TABLE A4 continued

Percentage of non-routine information requests received since 1 July 2011 that were answered 'in time', by quarter

Government body	Percentage of non-routine information requests that were answered 'in time' ¹								
	2011		2012				2013		
	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	94.2%	94.8%	97.2%	95.4%	90.4%	96.1%	90.8%	96.0%	94.9%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission †	98.3%	98.5%	97.3%	98.5%	*	-	-	-	-
Crown Prosecution Service	88.6%	89.7%	96.9%	92.9%	90.1%	85.2%	76.8%	71.3%	63.6%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	100.0%	*
Food Standards Agency	96.9%	96.4%	100.0%	98.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	97.5%
Health and Safety Executive #	94.6%	93.6%	93.6%	93.7%	95.1%	93.1%	91.1%	88.7%	91.7%
HM Land Registry	100.0%	100.0%	98.6%	97.5%	100.0%	97.7%	99.0%	98.5%	100.0%
HM Revenue and Customs	89.6%	91.9%	91.8%	92.2%	90.2%	90.5%	91.7%	89.8%	92.1%
National Archives ²	99.7%	99.9%	98.8%	98.8%	97.9%	98.0%	98.0%	99.0%	98.4%
National Savings and Investments	100.0%	91.3%	100.0%	96.0%	*	95.2%	96.7%	*	95.3%
Office for National Statistics	83.9%	86.4%	95.3%	82.6%	92.5%	80.3%	87.7%	77.0%	97.6%
Office for Standards in Education	98.3%	98.2%	99.5%	98.9%	97.1%	96.3%	95.8%	97.1%	96.8%
Office of Fair Trading	95.6%	96.3%	98.2%	100.0%	98.9%	92.4%	96.9%	96.5%	92.0%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	92.3%	89.5%	91.1%	87.8%	92.3%	96.9%	87.5%	94.0%	86.5%
Office of Rail Regulation	95.1%	97.9%	86.4%	92.3%	94.9%	96.8%	95.6%	94.8%	95.2%
Ordnance Survey	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	*	*	*	100.0%
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	99.2%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.1%	96.9%	94.1%
Serious Fraud Office	54.5%	*	92.0%	86.1%	76.2%	75.7%	78.6%	80.4%	91.9%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	100.0%	98.7%	98.5%	98.5%	95.5%	100.0%	97.9%	97.6%	100.0%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	*	*	93.5%	*	100.0%	69.2%	94.1%	96.3%	96.1%

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 2013

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	13,320	769	2,411	10,083	5,532	1,235	2,868	448	54.9%	28.4%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	9,145	502	1,614	6,970	3,936	750	1,946	338	56.5%	27.9%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,175	267	797	3,113	1,596	485	922	110	51.3%	29.6%
Departments of State										
Attorney General's Office	78	0	50	28	10	2	16	0	35.7%	57.1%
Cabinet Office #	405	38	125	242	60	17	115	50	24.8%	47.5%
Communities and Local Government	208	0	33	175	111	31	20	13	63.4%	11.4%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	298	8	84	206	76	54	67	9	36.9%	32.5%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	138	23	17	98	67	9	18	4	68.4%	18.4%
Department for Education	390	22	49	319	225	32	50	12	70.5%	15.7%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	243	0	4	180	104	39	32	5	57.8%	17.8%
Department for International Development	127	1	19	107	74	10	22	1	69.2%	20.6%
Department for Transport #	1,074	11	263	800	622	69	96	13	77.8%	12.0%
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,513	20	60	1,433	949	91	379	14	66.2%	26.4%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	207	10	57	140	69	29	36	6	49.3%	25.7%
Department of Health	514	38	166	310	183	36	91	0	59.0%	29.4%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	32	0	4	28	22	3	3	0	78.6%	10.7%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	293	28	47	218	64	69	49	36	29.4%	22.5%
HM Treasury #	642	97	170	375	187	32	133	23	49.9%	35.5%
Home Office #	893	77	135	681	285	77	251	68	41.9%	36.9%
Ministry of Defence #	904	56	146	702	430	62	168	42	61.3%	23.9%
Ministry of Justice #	1,038	66	140	832	324	87	382	39	38.9%	45.9%
Northern Ireland Office	60	2	31	27	20	1	5	1	74.1%	18.5%
Scotland Office	41	5	8	28	24	0	2	2	85.7%	7.1%
Wales Office	47	0	6	41	30	0	11	0	73.2%	26.8%

TABLE A5 continued
Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2013

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	158	14	25	119	46	42	30	1	38.7%	25.2%
Crown Prosecution Service	165	12	30	123	56	2	44	21	45.5%	35.8%
Debt Management Office	15	0	6	9	7	2	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	40	1	13	26	16	6	4	0	61.5%	15.4%
Health and Safety Executive #	1,416	44	494	878	438	188	216	36	49.9%	24.6%
HM Land Registry	93	2	10	81	77	1	3	0	95.1%	3.7%
HM Revenue and Customs	554	26	55	473	172	24	272	5	36.4%	57.5%
National Archives	853	104	54	695	390	104	165	36	56.1%	23.7%
National Savings and Investments	43	0	4	39	37	0	2	0	94.9%	5.1%
Office for National Statistics	84	0	17	67	58	0	9	0	86.6%	13.4%
Office for Standards in Education	186	15	13	158	43	40	73	2	27.2%	46.2%
Office of Fair Trading	87	11	6	70	21	17	32	0	30.0%	45.7%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	74	6	12	58	47	5	4	2	81.0%	6.9%
Office of Rail Regulation	62	10	13	39	11	22	4	2	28.2%	10.3%
Ordnance Survey	35	0	11	24	16	5	3	0	66.7%	12.5%
Royal Mint	5	0	0	5	2	0	3	0	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	136	20	7	109	66	10	28	5	60.6%	25.7%
Serious Fraud Office	37	0	5	32	14	2	16	0	43.8%	50.0%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	56	2	10	44	22	10	12	0	50.0%	27.3%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	76	0	12	64	57	5	2	0	89.1%	3.1%

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 2011

Government body	Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests that were granted in full								
	2011		2012				2013		
	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	55.8%	55.3%	53.1%	53.3%	52.6%	54.8%	54.6%	53.1%	54.9%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	53.3%	56.0%	55.9%	52.4%	52.9%	54.0%	56.0%	54.1%	56.5%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	54.2%	55.3%	54.0%	54.5%	53.9%	49.9%	52.2%	50.9%	51.3%
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	*	*	*	29.2%	*	*	53.3%	*	35.7%
Cabinet Office #	42.3%	30.2%	27.5%	18.5%	29.0%	32.7%	23.1%	24.2%	24.8%
Communities and Local Government	69.8%	71.4%	70.1%	70.9%	62.4%	71.8%	61.1%	68.9%	63.4%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	44.7%	42.5%	42.0%	42.1%	45.8%	37.9%	43.2%	35.3%	36.9%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	67.0%	69.5%	72.3%	82.1%	61.5%	65.8%	44.3%	63.6%	68.4%
Department for Education	57.4%	61.3%	65.6%	66.5%	62.6%	62.9%	67.4%	64.8%	70.5%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	65.0%	59.7%	62.4%	58.8%	58.7%	76.1%	52.5%	68.9%	57.8%
Department for International Development	70.3%	61.5%	75.0%	67.0%	68.6%	74.4%	73.6%	58.3%	69.2%
Department for Transport #	76.1%	77.3%	77.1%	68.6%	74.6%	73.8%	75.1%	73.8%	77.8%
Department for Work and Pensions #	63.9%	65.9%	65.4%	64.8%	68.7%	68.0%	76.1%	70.9%	66.2%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	39.4%	54.5%	36.1%	39.8%	33.0%	40.5%	41.7%	37.4%	49.3%
Department of Health	69.3%	75.9%	30.2%	42.5%	46.3%	57.5%	57.0%	53.8%	59.0%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	*	68.0%	*	*	*	56.0%	51.7%	78.6%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	34.0%	31.8%	26.2%	20.2%	33.8%	31.6%	22.6%	25.9%	29.4%
HM Treasury #	44.8%	41.5%	37.2%	35.9%	25.6%	46.2%	44.4%	45.9%	49.9%
Home Office #	51.1%	49.0%	49.1%	44.2%	47.5%	46.6%	37.5%	40.3%	41.9%
Ministry of Defence #	59.6%	59.4%	64.9%	66.2%	65.4%	60.0%	61.7%	63.6%	61.3%
Ministry of Justice #	31.2%	37.4%	36.9%	40.3%	38.2%	39.0%	37.9%	34.3%	38.9%
Northern Ireland Office	60.5%	76.7%	51.9%	50.0%	60.0%	59.3%	47.5%	*	74.1%
Scotland Office	61.9%	85.3%	77.1%	78.3%	*	72.4%	70.0%	76.9%	85.7%
Wales Office	*	*	*	*	41.7%	*	96.0%	95.2%	73.2%

TABLE A6 continued

Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 April 2011¹

Government body	Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests that were granted in full								
	2011			2012			2013		
	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	68.4%	64.4%	70.6%	61.2%	49.1%	49.0%	53.1%	45.2%	38.7%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission †	64.9%	77.6%	77.1%	71.7%	*	-	-	-	-
Crown Prosecution Service	45.1%	39.8%	43.6%	55.0%	46.3%	43.3%	46.3%	47.0%	45.5%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	56.5%	*	48.3%	50.0%	54.5%	47.8%	37.7%	39.3%	61.5%
Health and Safety Executive #	53.2%	51.8%	56.4%	52.1%	49.0%	49.8%	48.4%	50.9%	49.9%
HM Land Registry	92.3%	87.3%	91.7%	97.0%	95.7%	95.0%	86.2%	90.9%	95.1%
HM Revenue and Customs	44.7%	41.1%	39.8%	44.6%	35.1%	35.5%	38.1%	29.3%	36.4%
National Archives	57.4%	59.9%	60.6%	54.3%	57.0%	67.8%	63.1%	55.9%	56.1%
National Savings and Investments	91.3%	87.0%	70.4%	91.3%	*	*	85.7%	*	94.9%
Office for National Statistics	80.4%	74.1%	71.8%	97.2%	83.3%	94.0%	92.1%	89.3%	86.6%
Office for Standards in Education	42.5%	42.6%	45.6%	42.1%	37.0%	39.7%	32.1%	29.7%	27.2%
Office of Fair Trading	20.5%	19.7%	24.7%	26.8%	29.3%	28.2%	32.2%	35.3%	30.0%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	*	56.7%	61.3%	51.4%	59.0%	79.2%	68.1%	81.4%	81.0%
Office of Rail Regulation	75.9%	16.3%	53.6%	59.1%	50.0%	*	50.0%	42.4%	28.2%
Ordnance Survey	78.6%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	66.7%
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	62.8%	60.0%	73.0%	77.6%	75.0%	55.6%	73.9%	78.3%	60.6%
Serious Fraud Office	*	*	*	65.5%	*	50.0%	56.5%	30.8%	43.8%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	67.7%	63.9%	46.0%	32.6%	42.5%	34.0%	31.6%	38.5%	50.0%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	*	*	11.5%	*	*	59.1%	73.1%	85.7%	89.1%

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 2013

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	1,634	1,218	2,852
Number of requests where each exemption (listed in Part II of FoI Act²) was applied			
S(22) - Information intended for future publication	203	31	234
S(23) - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters	96	4	100
S(24) - National security	53	0	53
S(26) - Defence	23	1	24
S(27) - International relations	83	2	85
S(28) - Relations within the United Kingdom	2	1	3
S(29) - The economy	9	0	9
S(30) - Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities	4	163	167
S(31) - Law enforcement	119	109	228
S(32) - Court records, etc	57	9	66
S(33) - Audit functions	1	33	34
S(34) - Parliamentary privilege	0	0	0
S(35) - Formulation of Government policy, etc	164	8	172
S(36) - Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs	67	10	77
S(37) - Communications with Her Majesty, etc and honours	10	3	13
S(38) - Health and Safety	22	18	40
S(39) - Environmental information	³	³	³
S(40) - Personal information	763	636	1,399
S(41) - Information provided in confidence	74	61	135
S(42) - Legal professional privilege	41	19	60
S(43) - Commercial interests	161	45	206
S(44) - Prohibitions on disclosure	31	169	200
Number of requests where each exception (listed in Part 3 of EIRs) was applied			
3(a) - Exempt personal data	40	39	79
4(b) - Manifestly unreasonable	15	6	21
4(c) - Too general	1	1	2
4(d) - Work in progress / incomplete data	14	1	15
4(e) - Internal communications	25	0	25
5(a) - Adverse effect on international relations, defence, national security, public safety	14	6	20
5(b) - Adverse effect on course of justice or conduct of enquiries	3	0	3
5(c) - Adverse effect on intellectual property rights	0	0	0
5(d) - Impinges on confidentiality of a public authority's work	0	2	2
5(e) - Impinges on confidentiality of commercial or industrial information	11	7	18
5(f) - Adverse effect on interests of person who provided the information	4	0	4
5(g) - Adverse effect on protection of environment to which information relates	0	0	0
Environmental Exceptions	127	62	189

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: 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 handling 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:

- (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.**

Users 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 and individuals 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 July and September 2013. 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 while maintaining consistency, 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 2013.

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
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 2011 and the end of September 2013, the period covered by the tables in this bulletin.

Since July 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 for 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 and Non-Departmental Public Bodies count the non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well as 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 Education

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

Standards and Testing Agency (STA)
Education Funding Agency (EFA)
Teaching Agency (TA)
National College for School Leadership (NCSL)

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 and Carers' Service
Jobcentre plus
Pension Service
Rent Service

Health and Safety Executive

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

Chemical Regulation Directorate (Formerly Pesticides Safety Directorate)
Health and Safety Laboratories
Office for Nuclear Regulation

HM Treasury

Figures include requests received by the Office for Budget Responsibility.

Home Office

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

Criminal Records Bureau
Borders and Immigration Agency
Identity and Passport
National Fraud Authority (from 1 July 2011)
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 the following agencies:

HM Courts and Tribunals Service (where they were referred to the department's Data Access and Compliance Unit)
Legal Aid Agency (from 1 July 2013)

Annex D: Correction to Previous Editions

Due to 'machinery of government' changes, it is difficult to maintain an accurate list of executive agencies covered by the statistics. The following mistakes have been identified:

- 1) The Met Office was a part of the Ministry of Defence and included in their FOI return until July 2011. After July 2011 responsibility moved to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills but was not subsequently included in the BIS return, as the publication claimed.
- 2) The Health and Safety Executive has included requests sent to the following agencies:
 - I. Chemical Regulation Directorate (Formerly Pesticides Safety Directorate), since July 2008
 - II. Office for Nuclear Regulation, since July 2011
 - III. Health and Safety Laboratories, since January 2005

Annex E: Planned changes to Bulletin

We are planning to make some changes to this publication which are outlined below. If you would like to comment on either of these proposals or if you have any other feedback or questions about this statistical bulletin, or requests for further information, please direct them to the appropriate contact provided at the end of this report.

1. Requests exempt under section 21 (information readily accessible) of the FOI Act are currently excluded from the publication, as explained in Annex B. We are planning to include these requests from January 2014 in order to monitor the full use of the Act. Information about these requests will be presented in an additional separate section of the bulletin in order to make long term comparisons with historical data.
2. Percentages for timeliness and outcomes are not currently supplied when the number of requests is less than 20. However, the information to calculate the percentage is presented. We plan to provide these percentages directly.

There will be no loss of data from these changes. The changes are scheduled to apply to the Q1 (January-March) edition in 2014.

Annex F: 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/information-access-rights/foi-guidance-for-practitioners

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 July and May 2013. They relate to information requests received during the period 1 January to 31 March 2013. Thanks are due to FOI officers for their work in preparing these returns. The collection of monitoring data began on the 21st working day after the last day of this period (i.e. on 28th October 2013), 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 2013 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:

Paul Halford

Tel: 020 3334 3546

Email: Paul.Halford@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

Mike Elkins

Chief Statistician

Ministry of Justice

7th Floor

102 Petty France

London

SW1H 9AJ

Tel: 020 3334 2946

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

© Crown copyright

Produced by the Ministry of Justice

Alternative formats are available on request from statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk