

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Statistics on implementation in central government Q1: January - March 2011

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

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Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“Fol Act”) and the associated Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (“EIRs”) came fully into force on 1 January 2005. This bulletin covers the period January to March 2011 and presents the latest quarterly set of statistics on their implementation within central government.

The previous quarterly bulletins, together covering the period from January 2005 to December 2010, are available via the links on the following pages of the Ministry of Justice and National Archives websites:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/statistics-and-data/foi/implementation.htm>

<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**, and information given out on request as a part of routine business should not be counted. **Appendix A** gives a definition of a “non-routine” request, and other information on the scope of these statistics.

This bulletin presents monitoring statistics for a total of 44 central government bodies, including all major departments of state. **Appendix B** gives a full list of monitored bodies.

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 of 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 note 1 in Appendix B for full details of departmental name changes that have occurred since Q1 2009, the period covered by the tables in this bulletin.

Executive summary

Number of requests *[see Table 1 and Table A]*

Across all the monitored bodies covered in these statistics, a total of 12,128 “non-routine” information requests were received during the first quarter (January to March) of 2011 (Q1) – an increase of 8 per cent on the first quarter of 2010.

Although there has been considerable quarter-on-quarter variation, there has been a generally increasing trend in the number of requests received by the monitored bodies over the past three years. Some 94 per cent of the requests received during Q1 had been processed at the time of monitoring.

Departments of State reported receiving 7,783 “non-routine” information requests during Q1, an increase of 14 per cent on the corresponding quarter of the previous year. Other monitored bodies received 4,345 requests which is almost unchanged when compared to the first quarter of 2010.

Of this total of 12,128 requests, 437 were handled under the amended Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) which came into force on 1 January 2005.

Timeliness of response to requests *[see Table 2 and Table B]*

During Q1 of 2011, 91 per cent of all monitored bodies’ requests (excluding those “on hold” or lapsed) were “in time”, in that they were processed within the statutory deadline¹ or were subject to a permitted deadline extension. This is a decrease on the 92 per cent from Q4 2010, and halts the increasing trend seen in 2010.

Initial outcomes of requests *[see Table 3 and Table C]*

Of all “resolvable” requests received during Q1 of 2011 (i.e. requests where it was possible to make a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought), 54 per cent were granted in full. The proportion of requests granted in full has generally followed a flat trend over the last two years.

¹ 20 working days generally, 30 working days for The National Archives.

Commentary

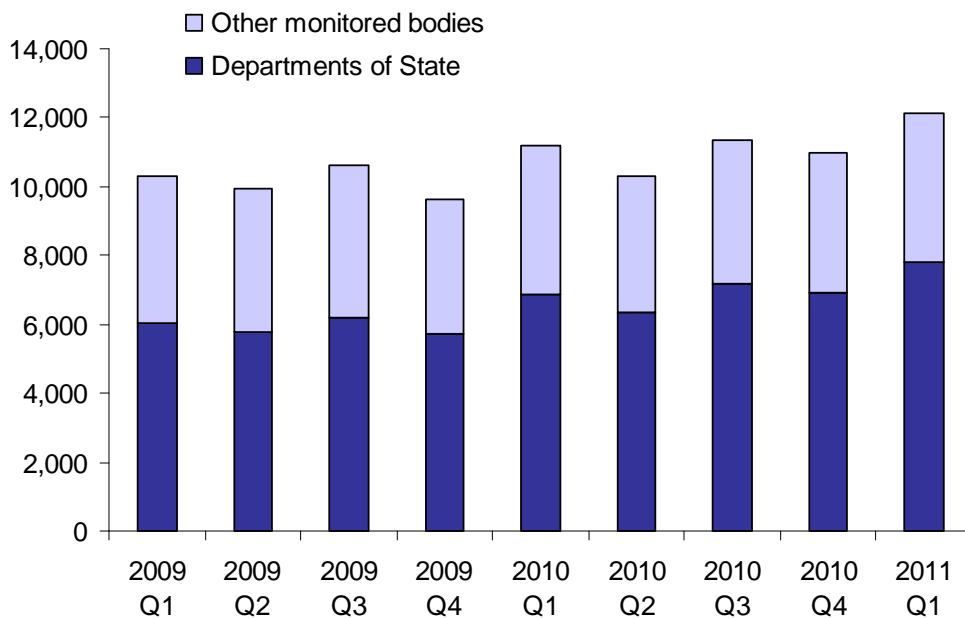
Number of requests [see Table 1 and Table A]

Departments of State reported receiving a total of 7,783 information requests under the Freedom of Information Act and the associated Environmental Information Regulations during the quarter from 1 January to 31 March 2011 (Q1). Other monitored bodies reported having received 4,345 requests. Across all monitored bodies, therefore, a total of 12,128 requests were reported. This constitutes the highest quarterly total number of requests received by monitored bodies since the very first quarter of the Act's implementation in Q1 2005.

This overall total for Q1 of 2011 is 8 per cent greater than in the corresponding quarter last year (i.e. Q1 of 2010), and 11 per cent more than in the preceding quarter. Although there has been considerable quarter-on-quarter variation, there has been a generally increasing trend in the number of requests received by the monitored bodies over the past three years

The number of requests received by Departments of State was 14 per cent more than during the same period last year, while the total received by other monitored bodies was almost unchanged. Departments of State accounted for 64 per cent of all requests received by monitored bodies in Q1 of 2011.

Figure 1: Numbers of FoI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies, quarterly from Q1 2009



Of the Departments of State, the Ministry of Defence reported having received 957 requests during Q1, the highest departmental total. The other departments that received more than 700 requests were:

- Department for Transport - 898
- Department for Work and Pensions - 877
- Home Office - 866
- Ministry of Justice - 847

Among other monitored bodies, the Health and Safety Executive reported having received 1,757 requests during Q1, while the National Archives received 756. 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 almost 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 437 such requests during the first quarter of 2011, 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 and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with more than 70 requests each, had the highest totals.

Status of requests at time of monitoring *[see Table 1]*

A large majority of requests (94 per cent) received during Q1 had been processed by the time monitoring information was collected. Of the 616 requests that were still being processed by the monitored bodies, 93 (13 per cent) were reported as “on hold” or “lapsed” because a fee had been charged but no payment had been received. These 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 Table 2 and Table B]*

The FoI Act requires public bodies to respond to written requests for information within 20 working days of receipt (with limited exceptions, for example to allow additional time for the consideration of public interest).

Across all monitored bodies:

- 86 per cent of requests received during Q1 of 2011 were sent a response within this standard deadline – the same as in Q4 2010.
- 91 per cent of the requests received during Q1 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 92 per cent from Q4 2010, and halts the increasing trend seen in 2010.

Although the standard statutory deadline for response to a FoI request is 20 working days, 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.

Figure 2: Timeliness of responses to FoI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies in Q1 2011

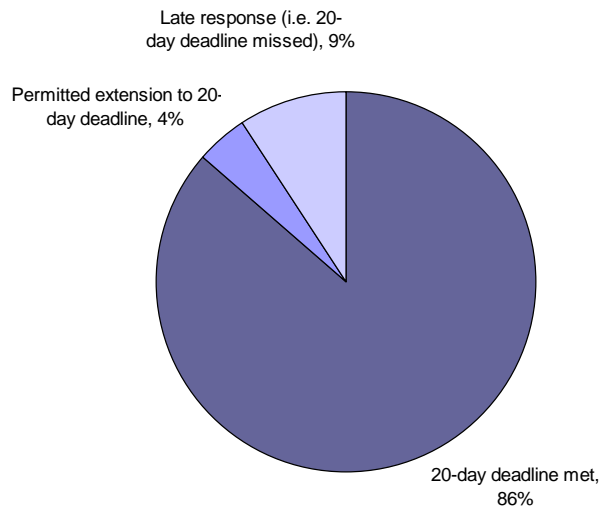
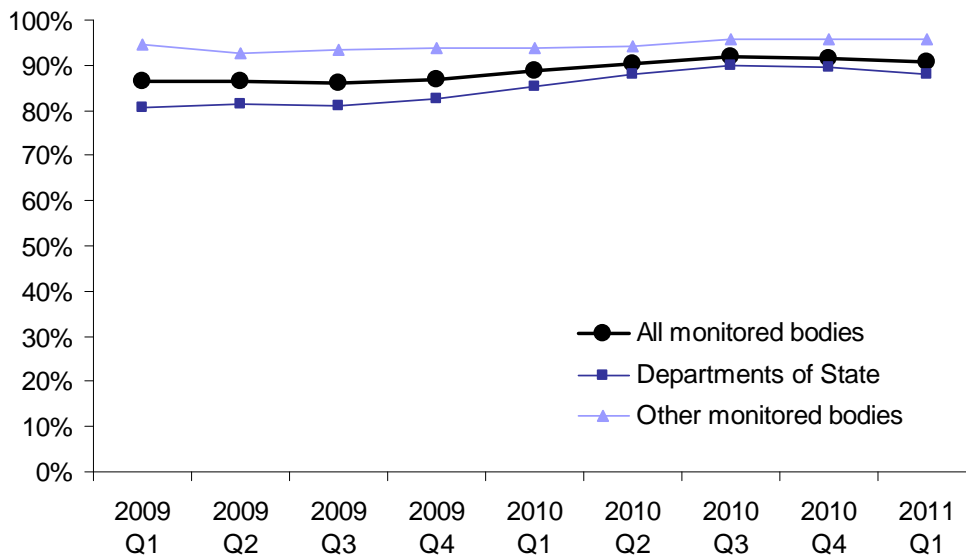


Figure 3: Percentage of FoI requests processed “in time” by Departments of State and other monitored bodies, quarterly from Q1 2009



Initial outcomes of requests [see Table 3 and Table C]

Of the 12,128 requests reported during Q1 of 2011 across all monitored bodies,

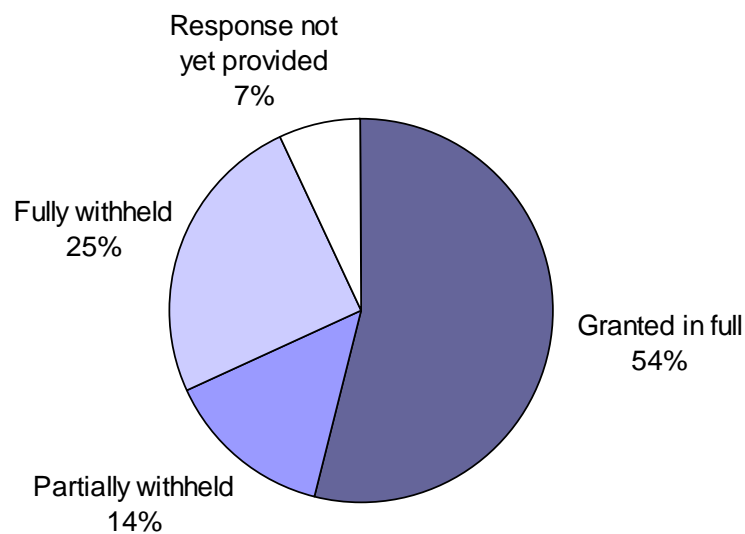
- 93 were “on hold” awaiting a fee payment;
- 2,216 requests sought information that was not held;
- 663 were responded to with “advice and assistance” because the body handling the request needed further information in order to identify the information being sought.

As a result, the remaining 9,156 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 Q1 of 2011,

- 54 per cent were granted in full, down from 55 per cent in Q4 2010; the proportion of requests granted in full has generally followed a flat trend over the last two years;
- 14 per cent were withheld in part;
- 25 per cent were withheld in full;
- 7 per cent had not yet received a substantive response at the time of monitoring.

Figure 4: Initial outcomes of “resolvable” FoI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies in Q1 2011



Use of exemptions and exceptions [see Table 4]

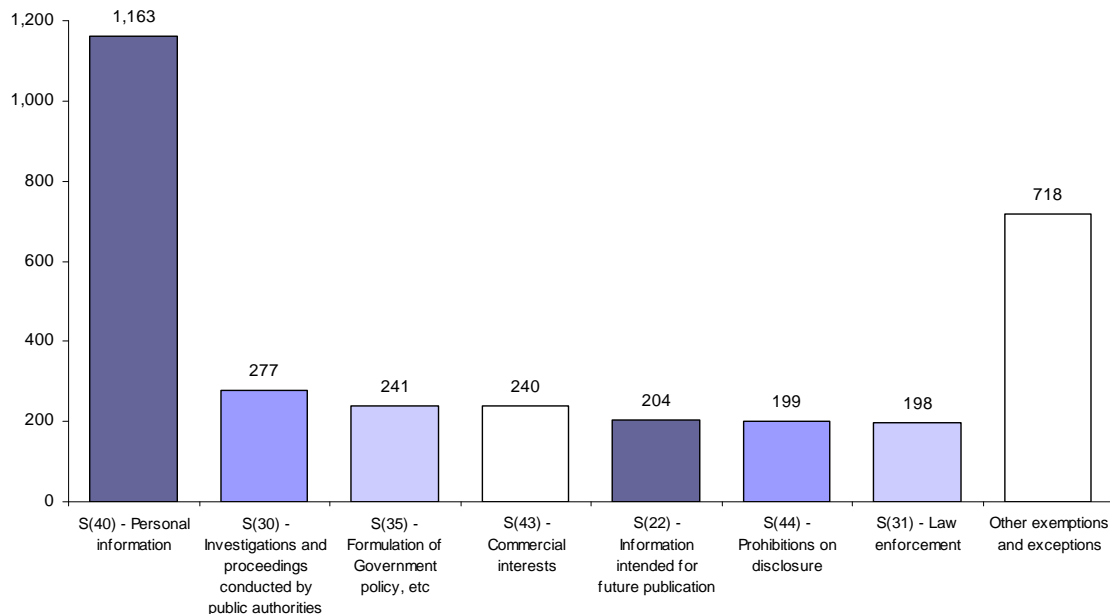
Under the FoI Act, a public authority can only refuse to provide requested information that it holds if:

- 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 Act.

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 2,648 requests were reported as having one or more of these exemptions or exceptions applied to them during Q1.

Figure 5: Number of exemptions and exceptions applied by Departments of State and other monitored bodies on requests received in Q1 2011



The most commonly applied exemptions or exceptions in Q1 2011 were:

- Section 40 of the FoI Act (relating to personal information), which was applied to 1,163 requests,
- Section 30 (investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities), which was applied to 277 requests,
- and Section 35 (formulation of government policy), which was applied to 241 requests,

Tables

Latest quarterly tables

- Table 1. Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January – 31 March 2011, and their status at time of monitoring
- Table 2. Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January – 31 March 2011
- Table 3. Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January – 31 March 2011
- Table 4. Exemptions and exceptions applied by monitored bodies when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 January – 31 March 2011

In-year performance and volume tables

- Table A. Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 January 2009
- Table B. Proportion of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were answered “in time”, by quarter, since 1 January 2009
- Table C. Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 January 2009

TABLE 1

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 January - 31 March 2011, and their status at time of monitoring¹

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring ¹			Number handled under EIRs ³
		Processed	"On hold" or lapsed ²	Still being processed	
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	12,128	11,419	93	616	437
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,783	7,235	0	548	244
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,345	4,184	93	68	193
<i>Departments of State</i>					
Attorney General's Office	31	31	0	0	0
Cabinet Office	395	238	0	157	0
Communities and Local Government	250	246	0	4	21
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	293	274	0	19	4
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	142	132	0	10	23
Department for Education	328	317	0	11	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	183	173	0	10	73
Department for International Development	110	104	0	6	0
Department for Transport #	898	855	0	43	66
Department for Work and Pensions #	877	871	0	6	1
Department of Energy and Climate Change	125	119	0	6	46
Department of Health	617	617	0	0	0
Export Credits Guarantee Department	23	20	0	3	0
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	367	330	0	37	1
Government Equalities Office	21	21	0	0	0
HM Treasury #	356	338	0	18	0
Home Office #	866	845	0	21	0
Ministry of Defence #	957	811	0	146	8
Ministry of Justice #	847	797	0	50	0
Northern Ireland Office	37	36	0	1	1
Scotland Office	18	18	0	0	0
Wales Office	42	42	0	0	0

TABLE 1 continued

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 January - 31 March 2011, and their status at time of monitoring¹

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring ¹			Number handled under EIRs ³
		Processed	"On hold" or lapsed ²	Still being processed	
Other bodies included in monitoring					
Central Office of Information	12	12	0	0	0
Charity Commission	268	267	0	1	0
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	70	70	0	0	0
Crown Prosecution Service	104	103	0	1	0
Debt Management Office	18	18	0	0	0
Food Standards Agency	30	30	0	0	0
Health and Safety Executive	1,757	1,715	0	42	87
HM Land Registry	61	59	2	0	0
HM Revenue and Customs	429	425	0	4	0
National Archives	756	650	91	15	0
National Savings and Investments	26	26	0	0	0
Office for National Statistics	89	89	0	0	0
Office for Standards in Education	241	241	0	0	0
Office of Fair Trading	132	132	0	0	0
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	30	30	0	0	1
Office of Rail Regulation	47	47	0	0	0
Ordnance Survey	23	23	0	0	0
Royal Mint	4	4	0	0	0
Rural Payments Agency	105	100	0	5	105
Serious Fraud Office	24	24	0	0	0
Treasury Solicitor's Department	101	101	0	0	0
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	18	18	0	0	0

- Figures supplied by these departments of state count non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. Appendix B gives full details.

Notes

1 - Monitoring returns were submitted to the Ministry of Justice during May 2011

2 - 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.

3 - 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 2

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January - 31 March 2011

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	12,035	10,394	535	1,106	86%	91%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,783	6,421	440	922	83%	88%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,252	3,973	95	184	93%	96%
<i>Departments of State</i>						
Attorney General's Office	31	29	2	0	94%	100%
Cabinet Office	395	142	25	228	36%	42%
Communities and Local Government	250	231	9	10	92%	96%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	293	231	42	20	79%	93%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	142	122	18	2	86%	99%
Department for Education	328	229	7	92	70%	72%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	183	158	9	16	86%	91%
Department for International Development	110	96	12	2	87%	98%
Department for Transport #	898	784	41	73	87%	92%
Department for Work and Pensions #	877	860	3	14	98%	98%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	125	94	17	14	75%	89%
Department of Health	617	616	1	0	100%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	23	18	0	5	78%	78%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	367	282	65	20	77%	95%
Government Equalities Office	21	21	0	0	100%	100%
HM Treasury #	356	310	40	6	87%	98%
Home Office #	866	755	65	46	87%	95%
Ministry of Defence #	957	656	68	233	69%	76%
Ministry of Justice #	847	702	9	136	83%	84%
Northern Ireland Office	37	35	1	1	95%	97%
Scotland Office	18	17	1	0	*	*
Wales Office	42	33	5	4	79%	90%

TABLE 2 continued

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January - 31 March 2011

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						
Central Office of Information	12	12	0	0	*	*
Charity Commission	268	259	0	9	97%	97%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	70	69	0	1	99%	99%
Crown Prosecution Service	104	95	2	7	91%	93%
Debt Management Office	18	18	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	30	30	0	0	100%	100%
Health and Safety Executive	1,757	1,606	31	120	91%	93%
HM Land Registry	59	59	0	0	100%	100%
HM Revenue and Customs	429	402	0	27	94%	94%
National Archives ^	665	616	49	0	93%	100%
National Savings and Investments	26	26	0	0	100%	100%
Office for National Statistics	89	89	0	0	100%	100%
Office for Standards in Education	241	239	2	0	99%	100%
Office of Fair Trading	132	126	0	6	95%	95%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	30	27	0	3	90%	90%
Office of Rail Regulation	47	44	1	2	94%	96%
Ordnance Survey	23	21	0	2	91%	91%
Royal Mint	4	2	0	2	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	105	96	9	0	91%	100%
Serious Fraud Office	24	22	0	2	92%	92%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	101	99	1	1	98%	99%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	18	16	0	2	*	*

Notes

* - These percentages are not shown 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 those received by the departments themselves. Appendix B gives full details.

^ - 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.

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:

Requests where the 20-day deadline for response under the Freedom of Information Act is extended to allow for consideration of the balance of the public interest.

Requests where the 20-day deadline for response under the Environmental Information Regulations is extended because of the complexity or volume of the request.

TABLE 3
Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January - 31 March 2011

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	12,035	663	2,216	9,156	4,946	1,283	2,311	616	54%	25%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,783	406	1,375	6,002	3,184	746	1,524	548	53%	25%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,252	257	841	3,154	1,762	537	787	68	56%	25%
Departments of State										
Attorney General's Office	31	0	20	11	4	3	4	0	*	*
Cabinet Office	395	18	76	301	37	35	72	157	12%	24%
Communities and Local Government	250	0	41	209	164	15	26	4	78%	12%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	293	13	84	196	84	37	56	19	43%	29%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	142	18	32	92	56	14	12	10	61%	13%
Department for Education	328	22	30	276	181	32	52	11	66%	19%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	183	7	28	148	96	22	20	10	65%	14%
Department for International Development	110	0	3	107	65	10	26	6	61%	24%
Department for Transport #	898	8	185	705	491	63	108	43	70%	15%
Department for Work and Pensions #	877	0	42	835	523	80	226	6	63%	27%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	125	6	34	85	38	24	17	6	45%	20%
Department of Health	617	9	188	420	264	66	90	0	63%	21%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	23	1	2	20	8	2	7	3	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	367	32	71	264	74	73	80	37	28%	30%
Government Equalities Office	21	0	5	16	14	1	1	0	*	*
HM Treasury #	356	37	69	250	134	30	68	18	54%	27%
Home Office #	866	135	158	573	293	112	147	21	51%	26%
Ministry of Defence #	957	19	125	813	464	49	154	146	57%	19%
Ministry of Justice #	847	78	145	624	167	68	339	50	27%	54%
Northern Ireland Office	37	1	20	16	6	3	6	1	*	*
Scotland Office	18	0	3	15	11	4	0	0	*	*
Wales Office	42	2	14	26	10	3	13	0	38%	50%

TABLE 3 continued
Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January - 31 March 2011

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										
Central Office of Information	12	0	5	7	7	0	0	0	*	*
Charity Commission	268	13	33	222	146	45	30	1	66%	14%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	70	0	5	65	47	4	14	0	72%	22%
Crown Prosecution Service	104	7	18	79	41	5	32	1	52%	41%
Debt Management Office	18	0	1	17	15	2	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	30	0	6	24	15	6	3	0	63%	13%
Health and Safety Executive	1,757	92	574	1,091	576	212	261	42	53%	24%
HM Land Registry	59	4	4	51	39	8	4	0	76%	8%
HM Revenue and Customs	429	25	58	346	166	26	150	4	48%	43%
National Archives	665	40	44	581	358	83	125	15	62%	22%
National Savings and Investments	26	0	1	25	19	0	6	0	76%	24%
Office for National Statistics	89	5	1	83	60	4	19	0	72%	23%
Office for Standards in Education	241	8	42	191	120	42	29	0	63%	15%
Office of Fair Trading	132	26	6	100	14	18	68	0	14%	68%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	30	2	7	21	9	7	5	0	43%	24%
Office of Rail Regulation	47	7	7	33	20	5	8	0	61%	24%
Ordnance Survey	23	0	10	13	12	1	0	0	*	*
Royal Mint	4	0	0	4	2	1	1	0	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	105	16	6	83	48	13	17	5	58%	20%
Serious Fraud Office	24	0	6	18	11	3	4	0	*	*
Treasury Solicitor's Department	101	12	5	84	29	48	7	0	35%	8%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	18	0	2	16	8	4	4	0	*	*

Notes

* - These percentages are not shown 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 those received by the departments themselves. Appendix B gives full details.

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 (see note above) 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 4

Exemptions and exceptions¹ applied by monitored bodies* when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 January - 31 March 2011

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	1,415	1,233	2,648
Number of requests where each exemption (listed in Part II of FoI Act²) was applied			
S(22) - Information intended for future publication	164	40	204
S(23) - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters	45	8	53
S(24) - National security	53	1	54
S(26) - Defence	13	2	15
S(27) - International relations	80	2	82
S(28) - Relations within the United Kingdom	2	0	2
S(29) - The economy	4	1	5
S(30) - Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities	46	231	277
S(31) - Law enforcement	100	98	198
S(32) - Court records, etc	67	10	77
S(33) - Audit functions	1	1	2
S(34) - Parliamentary privilege	0	0	0
S(35) - Formulation of Government policy, etc	234	7	241
S(36) - Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs	41	3	44
S(37) - Communications with Her Majesty, etc and honours	13	6	19
S(38) - Health and Safety	27	27	54
S(39) - Environmental information	_3	_3	_3
S(40) - Personal information	506	657	1,163
S(41) - Information provided in confidence	61	70	131
S(42) - Legal professional privilege	43	16	59
S(43) - Commercial interests	186	54	240
S(44) - Prohibitions on disclosure	33	166	199
Number of requests where each exception (listed in Part 3 of EIRs) was applied			
3(a) - Exempt personal data	16	25	41
4(b) - Manifestly unreasonable	2	2	4
4(c) - Too general	4	0	4
4(d) - Work in progress / incomplete data	9	2	11
4(e) - Internal communications	25	3	28
5(a) - Adverse effect on international relations, defence, national security, public safety	4	0	4
5(b) - Adverse effect on course of justice or conduct of enquiries	10	1	11
5(c) - Adverse effect on intellectual property rights	1	0	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	7	3	10
5(f) - Adverse effect on interests of person who provided the information	3	0	3
5(g) - Adverse effect on protection of environment to which information relates	0	0	0

Notes

* - A full list of monitored bodies is shown in Appendix B. This also includes details of those departments of state whose figures include non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves.

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.

TABLE A
Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 Jan 2009

Government body	2009				2010				2011
	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	10,294	9,964	10,597	9,612	11,199	10,286	11,339	10,972	12,128
TOTAL for Departments of State only	6,019	5,769	6,208	5,736	6,857	6,339	7,200	6,898	7,783
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,275	4,195	4,389	3,876	4,342	3,947	4,139	4,074	4,345
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	19	28	27	28	28	33	37	29	31
Cabinet Office	274	253	261	193	236	235	307	303	395
Communities and Local Government	204	200	237	198	243	218	237	235	250
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills ¹	216	269	244	182	279	231	244	280	293
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	176	142	164	122	165	119	165	158	142
Department for Education ²	217	213	251	173	180	220	263	217	328
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	131	145	159	142	143	127	142	139	183
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	74	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Department for International Development	80	70	88	91	92	104	120	86	110
Department for Transport #	586	560	707	629	794	605	735	753	898
Department for Work and Pensions #	533	596	617	600	797	748	777	823	877
Department of Energy and Climate Change	55	54	88	89	171	138	144	123	125
Department of Health	423	485	503	486	510	465	522	526	617
Export Credits Guarantee Department	9	17	12	11	23	10	20	12	23
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	281	231	321	304	311	250	310	313	367
Government Equalities Office	-	-	-	-	30	15	29	32	21
HM Treasury #	446	399	315	291	438	523	666	435	356
Home Office #	643	638	577	637	763	699	781	826	866
Ministry of Defence #	758	670	766	724	738	693	718	767	957
Ministry of Justice #	757	679	732	731	808	805	854	707	847
Northern Ireland Office	65	49	82	59	66	42	56	50	37
Scotland Office	58	52	39	30	30	28	34	47	18
Wales Office	14	19	18	16	12	31	39	37	42

TABLE A continued

Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 Jan 2009

Government body	2009				2010				2011
	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information	20	8	14	8	13	12	16	13	12
Charity Commission	142	133	149	133	202	185	241	254	268
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	33	41	59	62	55	47	44	49	70
Crown Prosecution Service	125	139	119	136	135	103	124	107	104
Debt Management Office	4	6	6	4	10	9	15	11	18
Food Standards Agency	28	29	36	36	57	29	47	33	30
Health and Safety Executive	1,711	1,669	1,589	1,523	1,562	1,656	1,586	1,617	1,757
HM Land Registry	33	41	29	47	49	36	49	41	61
HM Revenue and Customs	323	355	409	339	391	369	403	459	429
National Archives	1,056	885	1,010	787	927	733	817	717	756
National Savings and Investments	33	36	44	18	23	20	27	22	26
Office for National Statistics	32	29	33	37	62	52	30	53	89
Office for Standards in Education	318	317	292	272	314	273	246	238	241
Office of Fair Trading	79	128	162	139	123	118	157	139	132
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	53	39	42	45	60	36	38	17	30
Office of Rail Regulation	63	52	59	61	67	43	33	52	47
Ordnance Survey	37	60	67	41	42	17	17	27	23
Royal Mint	5	9	11	4	8	5	3	5	4
Rural Payments Agency	73	83	84	75	91	86	83	84	105
Serious Fraud Office	27	32	24	23	33	20	33	25	24
Treasury Solicitor's Department	55	69	106	64	98	79	100	97	101
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	25	35	45	22	20	19	30	14	18

Notes

- Figures supplied by these departments of state count non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. Appendix B gives full details.

1 - Figures up to and including Q1 2009 are for the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. Please see Appendix B for more information.

2 - Figures up to and including Q1 2010 are for the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Please see Appendix B for more information.

TABLE B

Proportion of non-routine information requests received that were answered "in time", by quarter, since 1 Jan 2009 (see footnote)

Government body	2009				2010				2011
	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	86%	86%	86%	87%	89%	90%	92%	92%	91%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	81%	82%	81%	82%	85%	88%	90%	89%	88%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	95%	93%	93%	94%	94%	94%	96%	95%	96%
<i>Departments of State</i>									
Attorney General's Office	*	96%	96%	96%	96%	94%	100%	100%	100%
Cabinet Office	96%	95%	91%	86%	90%	88%	85%	77%	42%
Communities and Local Government	94%	95%	95%	95%	94%	96%	97%	96%	96%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills ¹	77%	76%	79%	85%	95%	95%	96%	93%	93%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	100%	99%	98%	98%	98%	100%	99%	97%	99%
Department for Education ²	87%	87%	80%	77%	91%	89%	69%	69%	72%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	91%	85%	85%	88%	93%	87%	94%	94%	91%
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	66%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Department for International Development	96%	97%	98%	93%	96%	97%	98%	95%	98%
Department for Transport #	90%	90%	94%	95%	94%	96%	92%	89%	92%
Department for Work and Pensions #	77%	75%	79%	79%	77%	82%	96%	97%	98%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	84%	72%	80%	87%	95%	96%	91%	89%	89%
Department of Health	89%	96%	96%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	*	*	*	96%	*	*	*	78%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	96%	97%	96%	93%	94%	98%	90%	93%	95%
Government Equalities Office	-	-	-	-	77%	*	97%	84%	100%
HM Treasury #	99%	100%	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	98%	98%
Home Office #	73%	65%	67%	68%	81%	80%	88%	90%	95%
Ministry of Defence #	66%	69%	49%	53%	55%	69%	66%	71%	76%
Ministry of Justice #	60%	71%	77%	81%	81%	84%	89%	88%	84%
Northern Ireland Office	97%	84%	99%	90%	95%	95%	100%	98%	97%
Scotland Office	53%	67%	56%	80%	73%	86%	100%	98%	*
Wales Office	*	*	*	*	*	97%	92%	97%	90%

TABLE B continued

Proportion of non-routine information requests received that were answered "in time", by quarter, since 1 Jan 2009 (see footnote)

Government body	2009				2010				2011
	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Charity Commission	99%	89%	91%	95%	93%	96%	98%	93%	97%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	36%	59%	71%	85%	64%	98%	100%	96%	99%
Crown Prosecution Service	99%	98%	96%	99%	96%	92%	95%	98%	93%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	100%	97%	100%	97%	91%	100%	94%	97%	100%
Health and Safety Executive	94%	93%	92%	92%	93%	93%	93%	93%	93%
HM Land Registry	94%	80%	97%	94%	96%	92%	100%	100%	100%
HM Revenue and Customs	88%	83%	85%	88%	89%	92%	91%	92%	94%
National Archives ^	98%	98%	97%	99%	98%	97%	99%	100%	100%
National Savings and Investments	94%	100%	100%	*	96%	*	100%	95%	100%
Office for National Statistics	91%	93%	94%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Office for Standards in Education	98%	97%	99%	95%	97%	99%	100%	100%	100%
Office of Fair Trading	96%	95%	96%	94%	98%	92%	97%	96%	95%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	91%	77%	95%	87%	97%	89%	89%	*	90%
Office of Rail Regulation	97%	92%	100%	98%	94%	88%	97%	98%	96%
Ordnance Survey	95%	98%	97%	98%	100%	*	*	100%	91%
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	97%	88%	90%	92%	75%	85%	98%	99%	100%
Serious Fraud Office	85%	63%	38%	96%	88%	*	100%	92%	92%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	98%	100%	99%	97%	99%	99%	100%	99%	99%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	56%	74%	100%	77%	*	*	97%	*	*

- Figures supplied by these departments count requests received by one or more of their agencies, and those received by the departments themselves. Appendix B gives full details.

* - These percentages are not shown because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer.

^ - 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.

1 - Figures up to and including Q1 2009 are for the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. Please see Appendix B for more information.

2 - Figures up to and including Q1 2010 are for the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Please see Appendix B for more information.

Notes: 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: Requests where the 20-day deadline for response under the Freedom of Information Act is extended to allow for consideration of the balance of the public interest.

Requests where the 20-day deadline for response under the Environmental Information Regulations is extended because of the complexity or volume of the request.

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 this calculation.

TABLE C

Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 Jan 2009 (see footnote)

Government body	2009				2010				2011
	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	56%	55%	55%	55%	54%	58%	56%	55%	54%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	54%	55%	53%	54%	52%	61%	57%	58%	53%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	59%	55%	57%	55%	57%	54%	53%	52%	56%
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Cabinet Office	27%	23%	29%	39%	24%	38%	26%	26%	12%
Communities and Local Government	68%	72%	69%	78%	77%	73%	73%	64%	78%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills ¹	31%	40%	46%	47%	51%	50%	54%	53%	43%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	60%	68%	66%	66%	64%	70%	56%	72%	61%
Department for Education ²	69%	60%	70%	75%	72%	82%	68%	72%	66%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	66%	71%	69%	65%	62%	67%	70%	62%	65%
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	65%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Department for International Development	66%	64%	66%	51%	52%	52%	68%	76%	61%
Department for Transport #	76%	65%	70%	73%	74%	71%	72%	72%	70%
Department for Work and Pensions #	67%	64%	64%	63%	55%	72%	63%	65%	63%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	36%	48%	50%	46%	46%	53%	48%	47%	45%
Department of Health	68%	69%	75%	76%	70%	70%	73%	71%	63%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	*	*	*	52%	*	*	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	28%	33%	30%	33%	26%	33%	28%	39%	28%
Government Equalities Office	-	-	-	-	77%	*	93%	61%	*
HM Treasury #	41%	60%	52%	56%	50%	70%	60%	50%	54%
Home Office #	40%	41%	40%	50%	47%	54%	51%	54%	51%
Ministry of Defence #	59%	61%	44%	45%	46%	65%	58%	63%	57%
Ministry of Justice #	40%	36%	31%	26%	28%	31%	33%	31%	27%
Northern Ireland Office	65%	53%	56%	43%	45%	69%	68%	50%	*
Scotland Office	59%	67%	43%	74%	55%	*	58%	44%	*
Wales Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	73%	81%	38%

TABLE C continued

Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 Jan 2009 (see footnote)

Government body	2009				2010				2011
	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Charity Commission	65%	56%	66%	64%	66%	64%	64%	60%	66%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	69%	58%	77%	44%	66%	56%	57%	61%	72%
Crown Prosecution Service	56%	48%	62%	66%	60%	49%	51%	62%	52%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	36%	40%	38%	15%	39%	38%	32%	31%	63%
Health and Safety Executive	51%	55%	52%	50%	53%	53%	52%	51%	53%
HM Land Registry	97%	95%	97%	88%	91%	93%	91%	94%	76%
HM Revenue and Customs	67%	50%	45%	49%	53%	49%	47%	41%	48%
National Archives	71%	60%	63%	59%	56%	48%	48%	45%	62%
National Savings and Investments	94%	74%	84%	*	64%	*	46%	68%	76%
Office for National Statistics	63%	*	70%	60%	77%	74%	77%	91%	72%
Office for Standards in Education	45%	46%	65%	64%	61%	62%	61%	67%	63%
Office of Fair Trading	22%	21%	34%	35%	41%	31%	26%	24%	14%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	62%	54%	77%	70%	67%	68%	67%	*	43%
Office of Rail Regulation	78%	87%	74%	78%	82%	59%	*	75%	61%
Ordnance Survey	63%	66%	71%	76%	100%	*	*	65%	*
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	68%	67%	77%	80%	72%	90%	78%	72%	58%
Serious Fraud Office	*	*	*	*	48%	*	*	24%	*
Treasury Solicitor's Department	29%	63%	23%	30%	37%	44%	49%	41%	35%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	73%	68%	80%	*	*	*	*	*	*

- Figures supplied by these departments count requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. Appendix B gives full details.

* - These percentages are not shown because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer.

1 - Figures up to and including Q1 2009 are for the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. Please see Appendix B for more information.

2 - Figures up to and including Q1 2010 are for the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Please see Appendix B for more information.

Notes

"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.

Appendix A – 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 (Fol) 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 Fol 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 bodies included in the figures.

Appendix B – 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 May 2011. 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 44 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 first quarter of 2011.

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
Government Equalities Office
HM Treasury
Home Office
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Justice
Northern Ireland Office
Scotland Office
Wales Office

Other monitored bodies

Central Office of Information
Charity Commission
Child Maintenance and Enforcement 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 January 2009 and the end of March 2011, the period covered by the in-year performance and volume tables (Tables A, B and C) in this bulletin.

The **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)** was created on 5 June 2009, bringing together the responsibilities previously held by BERR and DIUS. The Q2 2009 statistics for BIS include requests received by BERR and DIUS between 1 April and 4 June. The

figures in Tables A, B and C for earlier quarters relate to requests received by BERR.

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.

The **Department for Education (DFE)** was formed on 12 May 2010 and is responsible for education and children's services. This wholly replaced the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The figures in Tables A, B and C for earlier quarters relate to requests received by DCSF.

2. Cabinet Office figures include requests that were addressed to 10 Downing Street.
3. 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.

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
- 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.

Ministry of Defence

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

- ABRO (Army Base Repair Organisation) (Trading Fund)
- Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency
- Army Training and Recruiting Agency
- British Forces Post Office
- Defence Analytical Services Agency
- Defence Aviation Repair Agency (Trading Fund)
- Defence Bills Agency
- Defence Communications Services Agency
- Defence Estates
- Defence Medical Education and Training Agency
- Defence Procurement Agency
- Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Trading Fund)
- Defence Storage and Distribution Agency
- Defence Transport and Movements Agency
- Defence Vetting Agency
- Disposal Services Agency
- Duke of York's Royal Military School
- Met Office (Trading Fund)
- Ministry of Defence Police and Guarding Agency
- Naval Recruiting and Training Agency
- Pay and Personnel Agency
- RAF Training Group Defence Agency
- Service Children's Education
- UK Hydrographic Office (Trading Fund)
- Veterans Agency

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.

Explanatory notes

1. 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.

2. 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.
3. 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:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/freedom-and-rights/freedom-of-information/index.htm>

4. 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/>

5. These statistics are derived from monitoring returns submitted to MoJ in May 2011. They relate to information requests received during the period 1 January to 31 March 2011. The collection of monitoring data began on the 21st working day after the last day of this period (i.e. on 4 May 2011), since 20 working days is the statutory deadline for public authorities to respond to information requests under both the FoI Act and the EIRs.
6. Only “non-routine” information requests are counted in these statistics. Important notes on the scope and consistency of these statistics are given in **Appendix A**.
7. These statistics cover a total of 44 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 Q1 2011 is shown in **Appendix B**.

Symbols and conventions

The following symbols have been used throughout the tables in this bulletin:

- = Not applicable
- 0 = Nil

Contact points for further information

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:

Hannah Murdoch
Tel: 020 3334 3548
Email: Hannah.murdoch@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

Iain Bell
Chief Statistician
Justice Statistics Analytical Services
Ministry of Justice
7th Floor
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ
Tel: 020 3334 3737
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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