

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Statistics on implementation in central government Q2: April - June 2012

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

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Executive summary

Number of FOI and EIR requests [see Table A1 & A2]

In Q2 2012 the monitored central government bodies received a total of 11,634 non-routine FOI (Freedom of Information Act) requests, a 5 per cent increase on the number received in the same quarter in 2011. Of these, 423 were handled under the amended EIRs (Environmental Information Regulations) an increase of 28 per cent compared to Q2 2011.

Departments of State reported receiving a total of 7,468 information requests under the Freedom of Information Act and the associated Environmental Information Regulations during the quarter from 1 April to 30 June 2012 (Q2). Other monitored bodies reported having received 4,166 requests.

The number of requests received by Departments of State was 5 per cent higher than during the same period last year and they accounted for 64 per cent of all requests received by monitored bodies in Q2 of 2012, a slight decrease on the previous quarter. This is partly due to the temporary rises in Q1 for the Department of Health and the Department for Work and Pensions who experienced a short-term increase due to new areas of work.

Although there has been considerable quarter-on-quarter variation, there has been a generally increasing trend in the number received by the monitored bodies over the past three years.

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

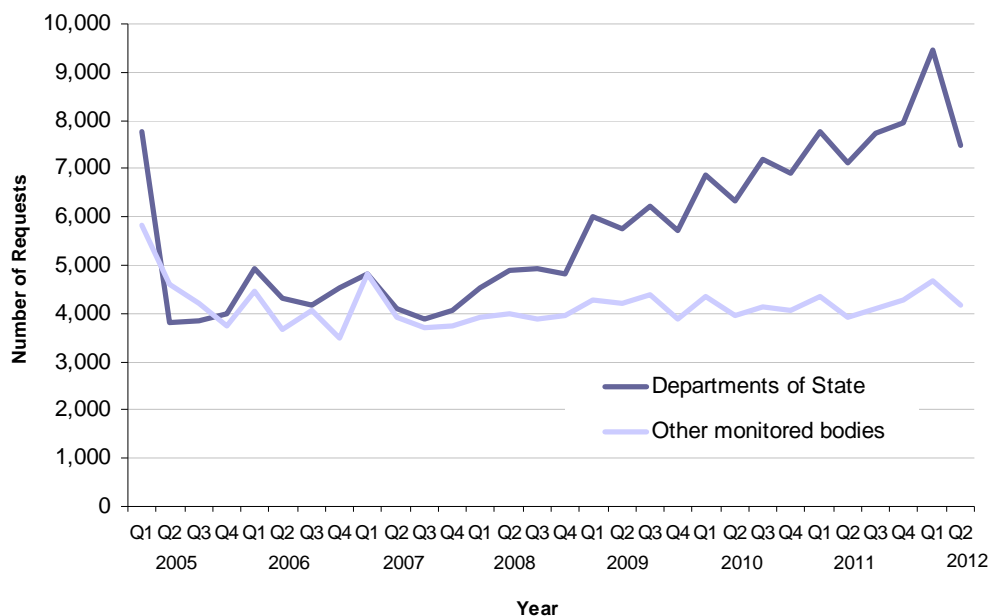


Figure 1 shows that since an initial peak the number of requests received has increased for Departments of State with an upward trend since 2007. This is in contrast to other monitoring bodies volumes that have remained relatively stable at about 4,000 per quarter. The number of requests received by all the monitored bodies averaged almost 12,000 per quarter during 2011. In the latest quarter the number of requests has reversed the increasing series seen in the last few quarters.

The initial surge in requests prior to the emerging trend is reflective of the introduction of the Act in 2005 with many monitored bodies including requests that were considered routine. For example, some bodies included simple phone call requests for pre-existing information.

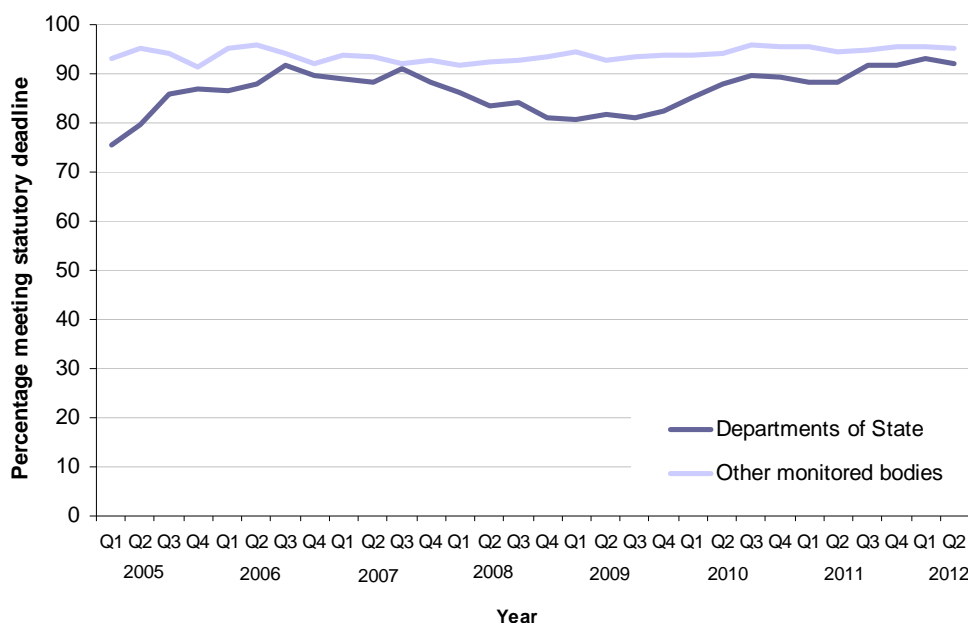
Timeliness of response to requests [see Tables A3 & A4]

93 per cent of the requests during Q2 2012 received a response within the statutory deadline or were subject to a permitted deadline extension, a slight decrease on the 94 per cent in the last quarter.

When excluding those that received a permitted extension 87 per cent of all requests received a substantive response within the statutory working-day limit. Timeliness has fallen in part due to the extraordinary increase in the previous quarter from two Departments of State and within this increase most requests had been dealt with inside their target time.

Figure 2 shows that since 2005 the proportion of those meeting the deadline within other monitored bodies has remained stable and above 90 percent whereas Departments of State had a dip in performance in 2008 and 2009 which has been reversed over the last two years.

Figure 2: Proportion of requests meeting statutory deadlines, Q1 2005 – Q2 2012

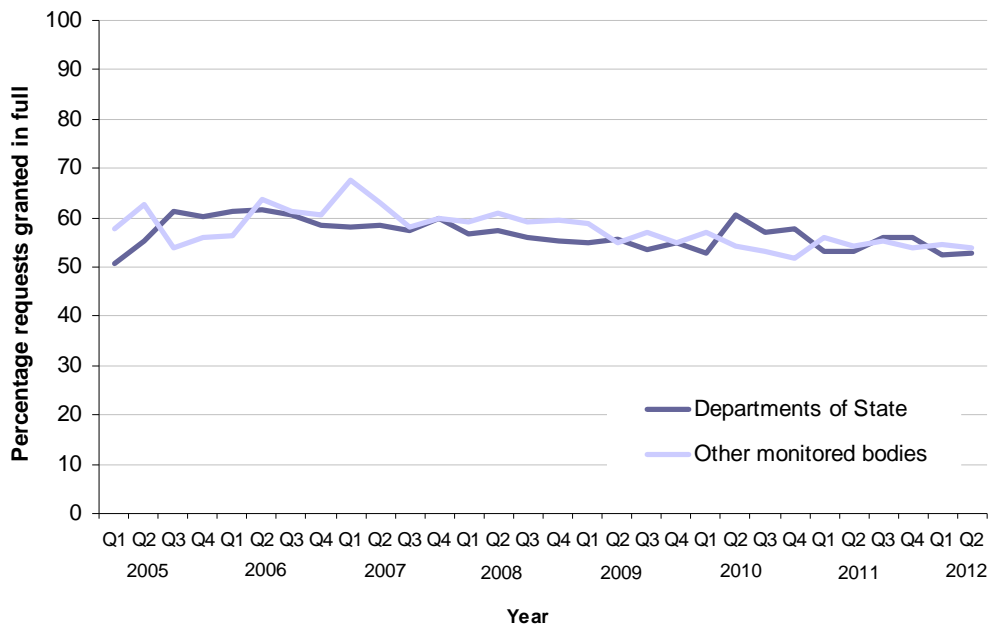


Initial outcomes of requests [see Tables A5 & A6]

Of all requests where it was possible to make a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought received during Q2 2012 just over half were granted in full.

Figure 3 shows the proportion of requests granted in full has slowly reduced since the act was introduced and this may reflect the changing nature of requests as the monitored bodies have made more routine information available to the public.

Figure 3: Percentage of resolvable requests granted in full, Q1 2005 – Q2 2012



Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoI Act) and the associated Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) came fully into force on 1 January 2005. This bulletin presents the latest set of quarterly statistics on their implementation within central government, giving quarterly statistics for the period April to June 2012.

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

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

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

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

archive.defra.gov.uk/corporate/policy/opengov/eir/

This bulletin publishes monitoring statistics for a total of 42 central government bodies, including all major departments of state. [Appendix B](#) gives a full list of monitored bodies¹.

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

Departmental name changes

Please refer to note 1 in [Appendix B](#) for full details of departmental name changes that have occurred since Q2 2010, the period covered by the tables in this bulletin.

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

Commentary

Number of requests [see Tables A1 & A2]

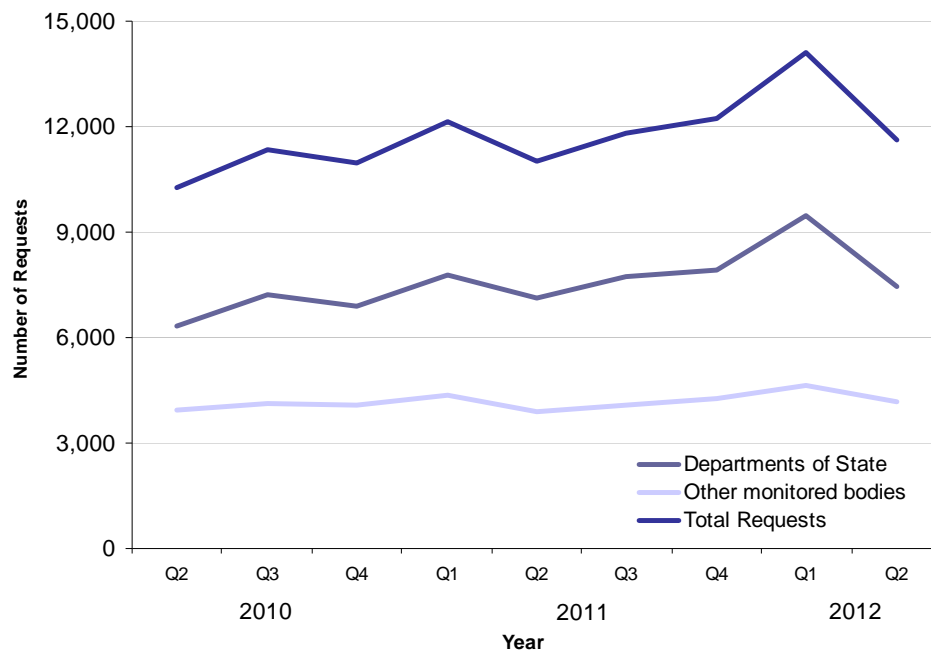
Departments of State reported receiving a total of 7,468 information requests under the Freedom of Information Act and the associated Environmental Information Regulations during the quarter from 1 April to 30 June 2012 (Q2). Other monitored bodies reported having received 4,166 requests. Across all monitored bodies, therefore, a total of 11,634 requests were reported.

This overall total for Q2 of 2012 is 5 per cent greater than in the corresponding quarter last year (i.e. Q2 of 2011), and 18 per cent less than in the preceding quarter. This reduction when compared to the previous quarter is due to the temporary rise in Q1 for the Department of Health and the Department for Work and Pensions who experienced a short-term increase due to new areas of work and the return to a normal workload in Q2 for them both.

Although there has been considerable quarter-on-quarter variation, there has been a generally increasing trend in the number received by the monitored bodies over the past three years. In the latest quarter the number of requests has reversed the increasing series seen in the last few quarters.

The number of requests received by Departments of State was 5 per cent more than during the same period last year, while the total received by other monitored bodies has increased by 7 per cent. Departments of State accounted for 64 per cent of all requests received by monitored bodies in Q2 of 2012, a slight decrease on the previous quarter.

Figure 4: Numbers of FoI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies, quarterly from Q2 2010



Of the Departments of State, the Department for Work and Pensions reported having received 1,005 requests during Q2, the highest departmental total. The other departments that received more than 800 requests were: Home Office with 900 and Ministry of Defence with 844 requests.

Among other monitored bodies, the Health and Safety Executive reported having received 1,599 requests during Q2, while the National Archives received 743. 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 56 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 423 such requests during the second quarter of 2012, accounting for 4 per cent of all requests received.

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

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

A large majority of requests (96 per cent) received during Q2 had been processed by the time monitoring information was collected. Of the 409 requests that were still being processed by the monitored bodies, 56 (14 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 Tables A3 & A4]

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:

- 87 per cent of requests received during Q2 of 2012 were sent a response within this standard deadline – 3 per cent lower than in Q1 2012.
- Timeliness has fallen in part due to the increase in workload in the previous quarter from the Department of Health and the Department for Work and Pensions and within these increases most requests were dealt with inside their target time.

- 93 per cent of the requests received during Q2 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 94 per cent from Q1 2012, and halts the increase in the last few quarters.

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.

Table 1: Quarterly response timeliness performance for FOI/EIR requests received by monitored bodies from Q2 2010

		2010			2011				2012	
		2010 Q2	2010 Q3	2010 Q4	2011 Q1	2011 Q2	2011 Q3	2011 Q4	2012 Q1	2012 Q2
Departments of State	Response within 20 working days	83%	85%	83%	83%	83%	87%	86%	88%	85%
	Response "in time"	88%	90%	89%	88%	88%	92%	92%	93%	92%
Other monitored bodies	Response within 20 working days	91%	92%	92%	93%	92%	92%	93%	93%	92%
	Response "in time"	94%	96%	95%	96%	94%	95%	95%	95%	95%
All monitored bodies	Response within 20 working days	86%	88%	86%	86%	86%	88%	88%	90%	87%
	Response "in time"	90%	92%	92%	91%	90%	93%	93%	94%	93%

Initial outcomes of requests [see Tables A5 & A6]

Of the 11,634 requests reported during Q2 of 2012 across all monitored bodies,

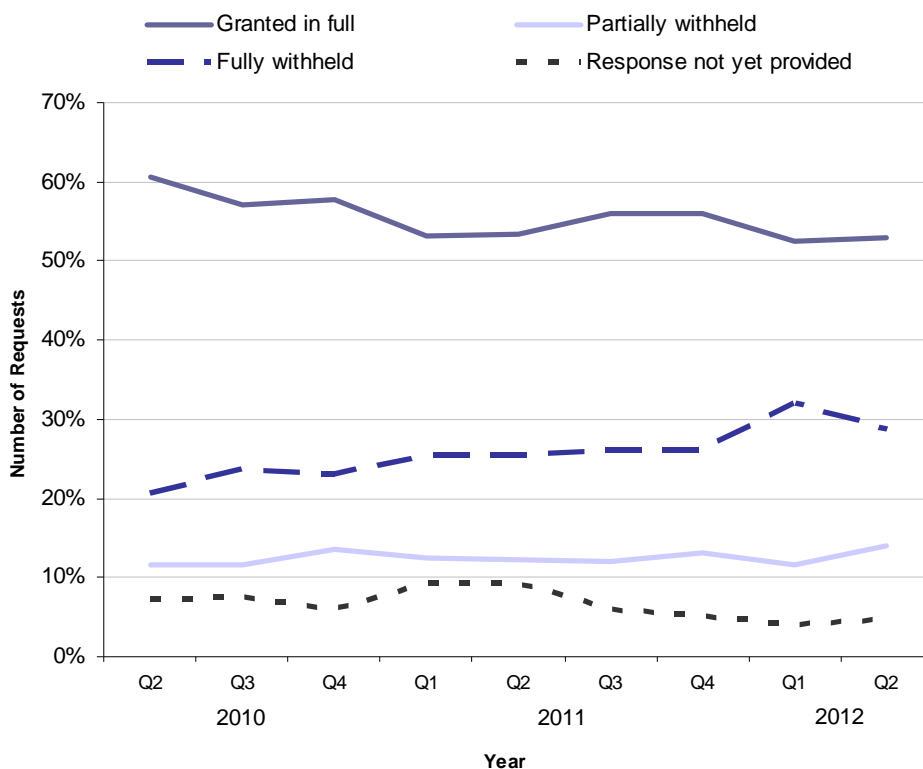
- 56 were “on hold” awaiting a fee payment;
- 2,227 requests sought information that was not held;
- 685 were responded to with “advice and assistance” because the body handling the request needed further information in order to identify the information being sought.

As a result, the remaining 8,666 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 Q2 of 2012,

- 53 per cent were granted in full, slightly down from Q1 2012; the proportion of requests granted in full has generally followed a flat trend over the last few years;
- 15 per cent were withheld in part;
- 28 per cent were withheld in full;
- 4 per cent had not yet received a substantive response at the time of monitoring.

Figure 5: Initial outcomes of “resolvable” FoI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies quarterly from Q2 2010



Use of exemptions and exceptions [see Table A7]

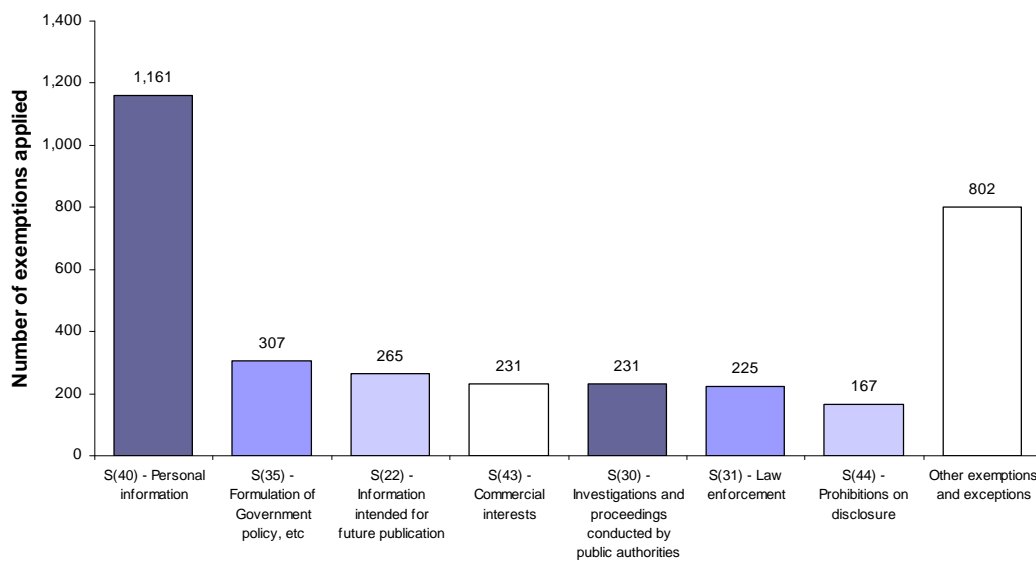
Under the FoI Act, a public authority can only refuse to provide requested information that it holds if:

- The request is considered vexatious or repeated
- The cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit
- The information falls in one or more of the categories of exempt information (“exemptions”) listed in Part II of the 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 2,749 requests were reported as having one or more of these exemptions or exceptions applied to them during Q2.

Figure 6: Number of exemptions and exceptions applied by Departments of State and other monitored bodies on requests received in Q2 2012



The most commonly applied exemptions or exceptions in Q2 2012 were:

- Section 40 of the FoI Act (relating to personal information), which was applied to 1,161 requests,
- Section 35 (formulation of government policy), which was applied to 307 requests,
- and Section 22 (Information intended for future publication) which was applied to 265 requests.

Tables

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

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

TABLE A1

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

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring ¹			
		Processed	"On hold" or lapsed ²	Still being processed	Number handled under EIRs ³
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	11,634	11,225	56	353	423
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,468	7,210	0	258	256
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,166	4,015	56	95	167
<i>Departments of State</i>					
Attorney General's Office	48	48	0	0	0
Cabinet Office #	378	375	0	3	0
Communities and Local Government	168	162	0	6	14
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	231	227	0	4	9
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	185	182	0	3	8
Department for Education	313	305	0	8	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	179	177	0	2	92
Department for International Development	106	106	0	0	0
Department for Transport #	713	702	0	11	54
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,005	954	0	51	0
Department of Energy and Climate Change	144	138	0	6	76
Department of Health	417	417	0	0	0
Export Credits Guarantee Department	18	17	0	1	0
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	336	306	0	30	0
HM Treasury #	624	562	0	62	2
Home Office #	900	872	0	28	0
Ministry of Defence #	844	809	0	35	0
Ministry of Justice #	757	750	0	7	1
Northern Ireland Office	46	45	0	1	0
Scotland Office	30	30	0	0	0
Wales Office	26	26	0	0	0

TABLE A1 continued

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

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring ¹			
		Processed	"On hold" or lapsed ²	Still being processed	Number handled under EIRs ³
Other bodies included in monitoring					
Charity Commission	219	218	0	1	0
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	65	65	0	0	0
Crown Prosecution Service	141	139	0	2	1
Debt Management Office	15	15	0	0	0
Food Standards Agency	49	48	0	1	0
Health and Safety Executive	1,599	1,580	0	19	64
HM Land Registry	79	79	0	0	0
HM Revenue and Customs	501	497	0	4	0
National Archives	743	625	56	62	0
National Savings and Investments	25	25	0	0	0
Office for National Statistics	46	46	0	0	0
Office for Standards in Education	183	183	0	0	0
Office of Fair Trading	72	72	0	0	0
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	41	36	0	5	0
Office of Rail Regulation	39	39	0	0	0
Ordnance Survey	22	22	0	0	0
Royal Mint	16	16	0	0	0
Rural Payments Agency	121	121	0	0	102
Serious Fraud Office	36	35	0	1	0
Treasury Solicitor's Department	135	135	0	0	0
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	19	19	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 August 2012

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 A2

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

Government body	2010			2011			2012		
	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	10,286	11,339	10,972	12,128	11,029	11,829	12,221	14,116	11,634
TOTAL for Departments of State only	6,339	7,200	6,898	7,783	7,124	7,738	7,942	9,452	7,468
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,947	4,139	4,074	4,345	3,905	4,091	4,279	4,664	4,166
<i>Departments of State</i>									
Attorney General's Office	33	37	29	31	42	36	44	49	48
Cabinet Office #	235	307	303	395	349	426	509	492	378
Communities and Local Government	218	237	235	250	221	242	230	179	168
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	231	244	280	293	256	273	229	299	231
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	119	165	158	142	195	161	177	184	185
Department for Education	220	263	217	328	245	289	287	349	313
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	127	142	139	183	150	166	164	200	179
Department for International Development	104	120	86	110	122	125	125	117	106
Department for Transport #	605	735	753	898	710	812	778	892	713
Department for Work and Pensions #	748	777	823	877	763	937	927	1,326	1,005
Department of Energy and Climate Change	138	144	123	125	115	131	159	216	144
Department of Health	465	522	526	617	417	478	433	1,077	417
Export Credits Guarantee Department	10	20	12	23	36	18	21	27	18
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	250	310	313	367	344	292	348	390	336
Government Equalities Office	15	29	32	21	-	-	-	-	-
HM Treasury #	523	666	435	356	480	654	688	759	624
Home Office #	699	781	826	866	786	813	867	923	900
Ministry of Defence #	693	718	767	957	830	930	877	914	844
Ministry of Justice #	805	854	707	847	901	835	933	910	757
Northern Ireland Office	42	56	50	37	61	51	60	58	46
Scotland Office	28	34	47	18	54	35	48	43	30
Wales Office	31	39	37	42	47	34	38	48	26

TABLE A2 continued

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

Government body	2010			2011			2012		
	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information ¹	12	16	13	12	10	7	11	-	-
Charity Commission	185	241	254	268	276	293	306	322	219
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	47	44	49	70	79	59	68	75	65
Crown Prosecution Service	103	124	107	104	100	132	117	162	141
Debt Management Office	9	15	11	18	11	11	12	17	15
Food Standards Agency	29	47	33	30	24	32	28	36	49
Health and Safety Executive	1,656	1,586	1,617	1,757	1,620	1,637	1,603	1,795	1,599
HM Land Registry	36	49	41	61	57	46	60	72	79
HM Revenue and Customs	369	403	459	429	461	461	443	611	501
National Archives	733	817	717	756	506	715	929	750	743
National Savings and Investments	20	27	22	26	29	24	23	30	25
Office for National Statistics	52	30	53	89	60	62	59	43	46
Office for Standards in Education	273	246	238	241	208	172	169	212	183
Office of Fair Trading	118	157	139	132	107	114	81	111	72
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	36	38	17	30	38	26	38	45	41
Office of Rail Regulation	43	33	52	47	42	41	95	44	39
Ordnance Survey	17	17	27	23	28	31	22	29	22
Royal Mint	5	3	5	4	4	5	4	5	16
Rural Payments Agency	86	83	84	105	101	118	97	118	121
Serious Fraud Office	20	33	25	24	26	22	15	25	36
Treasury Solicitor's Department	79	100	97	101	89	65	79	131	135
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	19	30	14	18	29	18	20	31	19

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 from Q1 2012 onward are included within the Cabinet Office return. Please see Appendix B for more information.

TABLE A3

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

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Timeliness of response			Percentage of requests meeting 20-day deadline	Percentage of requests "in time" (i.e. meeting deadline or with permitted extension)
		20-day deadline met	Permitted extension ² to 20-day deadline	Late response (i.e. 20-day deadline missed)		
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	11,578	10,114	662	802	87%	93%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,468	6,349	516	603	85%	92%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,110	3,765	146	199	92%	95%
Departments of State						
Attorney General's Office	48	48	0	0	100%	100%
Cabinet Office #	378	290	56	32	77%	92%
Communities and Local Government	168	156	5	7	93%	96%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	231	213	14	4	92%	98%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	185	145	40	0	78%	100%
Department for Education	313	252	11	50	81%	84%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	179	143	22	14	80%	92%
Department for International Development	106	95	10	1	90%	99%
Department for Transport #	713	665	23	25	93%	96%
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,005	853	3	149	85%	85%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	144	121	19	4	84%	97%
Department of Health	417	413	3	1	99%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	18	14	1	3	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	336	233	74	29	69%	91%
HM Treasury #	624	516	74	34	83%	95%
Home Office #	900	740	65	95	82%	89%
Ministry of Defence #	844	666	94	84	79%	90%
Ministry of Justice #	757	696	2	59	92%	92%
Northern Ireland Office	46	40	0	6	87%	87%
Scotland Office	30	28	0	2	93%	93%
Wales Office	26	22	0	4	85%	85%

TABLE A3 continued

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

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Timeliness of response			Percentage of requests meeting 20-day deadline	Percentage of requests "in time" (i.e. meeting deadline or with permitted extension)
		20-day deadline met	Permitted extension ² to 20-day deadline	Late response (i.e. 20-day deadline missed)		
Other bodies included in monitoring						
Charity Commission	219	209	0	10	95%	95%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	65	64	0	1	98%	98%
Crown Prosecution Service	141	130	1	10	92%	93%
Debt Management Office	15	15	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	49	43	5	1	88%	98%
Health and Safety Executive	1,599	1,479	20	100	92%	94%
HM Land Registry	79	77	0	2	97%	97%
HM Revenue and Customs	501	458	4	39	91%	92%
National Archives ^	687	580	99	8	84%	99%
National Savings and Investments	25	24	0	1	96%	96%
Office for National Statistics	46	38	0	8	83%	83%
Office for Standards in Education	183	180	1	2	98%	99%
Office of Fair Trading	72	72	0	0	100%	100%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	41	26	10	5	63%	88%
Office of Rail Regulation	39	34	2	3	87%	92%
Ordnance Survey	22	22	0	0	100%	100%
Royal Mint	16	14	0	2	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	121	119	2	0	98%	100%
Serious Fraud Office	36	29	2	5	81%	86%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	135	133	0	2	99%	99%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	19	19	0	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.

^ - 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 A4

Proportion of non-routine information requests received that were answered "in time", by quarter, since 1 April 2010 (see footnote)

Government body	2010			2011			2012		
	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	90%	92%	92%	91%	90%	93%	93%	94%	93%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	88%	90%	89%	88%	88%	92%	92%	93%	92%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	94%	96%	95%	96%	94%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	94%	100%	100%	100%	98%	100%	100%	96%	100%
Cabinet Office #	88%	85%	77%	42%	55%	85%	92%	93%	92%
Communities and Local Government	96%	97%	96%	96%	93%	92%	96%	94%	96%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	95%	96%	93%	93%	83%	88%	93%	93%	98%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	100%	99%	97%	99%	100%	100%	99%	98%	100%
Department for Education	89%	69%	69%	72%	87%	81%	75%	78%	84%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	87%	94%	94%	91%	92%	93%	84%	91%	92%
Department for International Development	97%	98%	95%	98%	99%	98%	98%	100%	99%
Department for Transport #	96%	92%	89%	92%	91%	93%	92%	95%	96%
Department for Work and Pensions #	82%	96%	97%	98%	95%	96%	93%	89%	85%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	96%	91%	89%	89%	91%	87%	97%	95%	97%
Department of Health	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	*	*	78%	69%	*	100%	93%	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	98%	90%	93%	95%	94%	92%	95%	91%	91%
Government Equalities Office	*	97%	84%	100%	-	-	-	-	-
HM Treasury #	99%	99%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	99%	95%
Home Office #	80%	88%	90%	95%	96%	96%	88%	93%	89%
Ministry of Defence #	69%	66%	71%	76%	81%	84%	85%	89%	90%
Ministry of Justice #	84%	89%	88%	84%	75%	86%	91%	92%	92%
Northern Ireland Office	95%	100%	98%	97%	98%	96%	87%	67%	87%
Scotland Office	86%	100%	98%	*	98%	100%	98%	98%	93%
Wales Office	97%	92%	97%	90%	83%	97%	95%	96%	85%

TABLE A4 continued

Proportion of non-routine information requests received that were answered "in time", by quarter, since 1 April 2010 (see footnote)

Government body	2010			2011			2012		
	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information ¹	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	-
Charity Commission	96%	98%	93%	97%	91%	94%	95%	97%	95%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	98%	100%	96%	99%	100%	98%	99%	97%	98%
Crown Prosecution Service	92%	95%	98%	93%	92%	89%	90%	97%	93%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	100%	94%	97%	100%	100%	97%	96%	100%	98%
Health and Safety Executive	93%	93%	93%	93%	94%	95%	94%	94%	94%
HM Land Registry	92%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	97%
HM Revenue and Customs	92%	91%	92%	94%	92%	90%	92%	92%	92%
National Archives [^]	97%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%
National Savings and Investments	*	100%	95%	100%	93%	100%	91%	100%	96%
Office for National Statistics	100%	100%	100%	100%	78%	84%	86%	95%	83%
Office for Standards in Education	99%	100%	100%	100%	99%	98%	98%	100%	99%
Office of Fair Trading	92%	97%	96%	95%	98%	96%	96%	98%	100%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	89%	89%	*	90%	87%	92%	89%	91%	88%
Office of Rail Regulation	88%	97%	98%	96%	100%	95%	98%	86%	92%
Ordnance Survey	*	*	100%	91%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	85%	98%	99%	100%	93%	99%	100%	100%	100%
Serious Fraud Office	*	100%	92%	92%	100%	55%	*	92%	86%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	99%	100%	99%	99%	99%	100%	99%	98%	99%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	*	97%	*	*	86%	*	*	94%	*

- 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 from Q1 2012 onward are included within the Cabinet Office return. 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 A5
Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 April - 30 June 2012

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Requests where advice and assistance ² provided	Requests where information not held	Total "resolvable" requests ³	Initial outcome of request				Percentage of resolvable requests granted in full	Percentage of resolvable requests withheld in full
					Granted in full	Partially withheld	Fully withheld ⁴	Response not yet provided ⁵		
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	11,578	685	2,227	8,666	4,616	1,302	2,395	353	53%	28%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,468	425	1,357	5,686	3,010	790	1,628	258	53%	29%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,110	260	870	2,980	1,606	512	767	95	54%	26%
Departments of State										
Attorney General's Office	48	0	24	24	7	2	15	0	29%	63%
Cabinet Office #	378	17	134	227	42	29	153	3	19%	67%
Communities and Local Government	168	0	27	141	100	21	14	6	71%	10%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	231	11	75	145	61	34	46	4	42%	32%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	185	42	31	112	92	8	9	3	82%	8%
Department for Education	313	18	47	248	165	31	44	8	67%	18%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	179	6	25	148	87	22	37	2	59%	25%
Department for International Development	106	2	4	100	67	10	23	0	67%	23%
Department for Transport #	713	4	148	561	385	68	97	11	69%	17%
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,005	1	42	962	623	107	181	51	65%	19%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	144	1	50	93	37	26	24	6	40%	26%
Department of Health	417	8	117	292	124	83	85	0	42%	29%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	18	2	2	14	12	0	1	1	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	336	33	51	252	51	87	84	30	20%	33%
HM Treasury #	624	85	160	379	136	40	141	62	36%	37%
Home Office #	900	138	140	622	275	90	229	28	44%	37%
Ministry of Defence #	844	2	132	710	470	53	152	35	66%	21%
Ministry of Justice #	757	47	110	600	242	68	283	7	40%	47%
Northern Ireland Office	46	7	17	22	11	5	5	1	50%	23%
Scotland Office	30	1	6	23	18	4	1	0	78%	4%
Wales Office	26	0	15	11	5	2	4	0	*	*

TABLE A5 continued
Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 April - 30 June 2012

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Requests where advice and assistance ² provided	Requests where information not held	Total "resolvable" requests ³	Initial outcome of request				Percentage of resolvable requests granted in full	Percentage of resolvable requests withheld in full
					Granted in full	Partially withheld	Fully withheld ⁴	Response not yet provided ⁵		
Other bodies included in monitoring										
Charity Commission	219	11	20	188	115	48	24	1	61%	13%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	65	0	12	53	38	2	13	0	72%	25%
Crown Prosecution Service	141	8	24	109	60	6	41	2	55%	38%
Debt Management Office	15	2	3	10	10	0	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	49	0	9	40	20	11	8	1	50%	20%
Health and Safety Executive	1,599	72	557	970	505	211	235	19	52%	24%
HM Land Registry	79	0	13	66	64	0	2	0	97%	3%
HM Revenue and Customs	501	29	57	415	185	26	200	4	45%	48%
National Archives	687	84	87	516	280	48	126	62	54%	24%
National Savings and Investments	25	0	2	23	21	0	2	0	91%	9%
Office for National Statistics	46	0	10	36	35	1	0	0	97%	0%
Office for Standards in Education	183	3	21	159	67	48	44	0	42%	28%
Office of Fair Trading	72	12	4	56	15	6	35	0	27%	63%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	41	4	2	35	18	11	1	5	51%	3%
Office of Rail Regulation	39	4	13	22	13	2	7	0	59%	32%
Ordnance Survey	22	0	5	17	12	4	1	0	*	*
Royal Mint	16	0	0	16	15	0	1	0	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	121	28	17	76	59	4	13	0	78%	17%
Serious Fraud Office	36	2	5	29	19	3	6	1	66%	21%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	135	1	2	132	43	81	8	0	33%	6%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	19	0	7	12	12	0	0	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 A6

Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 April 2010 (see footnote)

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

TABLE A6 continued

Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 April 2010 (see footnote)

Government body	2011				2012				
	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun		
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information ¹	*	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	
Charity Commission	64%	64%	60%	66%	67%	68%	64%	71%	61%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	56%	57%	61%	72%	71%	65%	78%	77%	72%
Crown Prosecution Service	49%	51%	62%	52%	48%	45%	40%	44%	55%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	38%	32%	31%	63%	*	57%	*	48%	50%
Health and Safety Executive	53%	52%	51%	53%	52%	53%	52%	56%	52%
HM Land Registry	93%	91%	94%	76%	84%	92%	87%	92%	97%
HM Revenue and Customs	49%	47%	41%	48%	41%	45%	41%	40%	45%
National Archives	48%	48%	45%	62%	57%	57%	60%	61%	54%
National Savings and Investments	*	46%	68%	76%	73%	91%	87%	70%	91%
Office for National Statistics	74%	77%	91%	72%	78%	80%	74%	72%	97%
Office for Standards in Education	62%	61%	67%	63%	51%	43%	43%	46%	42%
Office of Fair Trading	31%	26%	24%	14%	19%	20%	20%	25%	27%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	68%	67%	*	43%	48%	*	57%	61%	51%
Office of Rail Regulation	59%	*	75%	61%	80%	76%	16%	54%	59%
Ordnance Survey	*	*	65%	*	*	79%	*	*	*
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	90%	78%	72%	58%	70%	63%	60%	73%	78%
Serious Fraud Office	*	*	24%	*	*	*	*	*	66%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	44%	49%	41%	35%	57%	68%	64%	46%	33%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	12%	*

- 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 from Q1 2012 onward are included within the Cabinet Office return. 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.

TABLE A7

Exemptions and exceptions¹ applied by monitored bodies* when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 April - 30 June 2012

Exemption / Exception ¹	Number of requests where exemption used		TOTAL
	Departments of State only	Other monitored bodies	
Total number of requests where one or more exemptions or exceptions were applied	1,590	1,159	2,749
Number of requests where each exemption (listed in Part II of FoI Act²) was applied			
S(22) - Information intended for future publication	234	31	265
S(23) - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters	81	11	92
S(24) - National security	75	1	76
S(26) - Defence	29	3	32
S(27) - International relations	78	4	82
S(28) - Relations within the United Kingdom	4	0	4
S(29) - The economy	21	0	21
S(30) - Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities	11	220	231
S(31) - Law enforcement	100	125	225
S(32) - Court records, etc	37	11	48
S(33) - Audit functions	7	3	10
S(34) - Parliamentary privilege	1	0	1
S(35) - Formulation of Government policy, etc	294	13	307
S(36) - Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs	57	6	63
S(37) - Communications with Her Majesty, etc and honours	7	1	8
S(38) - Health and Safety	36	20	56
S(39) - Environmental information	_3	_3	_3
S(40) - Personal information	602	559	1,161
S(41) - Information provided in confidence	54	65	119
S(42) - Legal professional privilege	27	6	33
S(43) - Commercial interests	183	48	231
S(44) - Prohibitions on disclosure	32	135	167
Number of requests where each exception (listed in Part 3 of EIRs) was applied			
3(a) - Exempt personal data	25	16	41
4(b) - Manifestly unreasonable	35	0	35
4(c) - Too general	10	0	10
4(d) - Work in progress / incomplete data	10	1	11
4(e) - Internal communications	20	2	22
5(a) - Adverse effect on international relations, defence, national security, public safety	8	2	10
5(b) - Adverse effect on course of justice or conduct of enquiries	9	0	9
5(c) - Adverse effect on intellectual property rights	1	0	1
5(d) - Impinges on confidentiality of a public authority's work	3	0	3
5(e) - Impinges on confidentiality of commercial or industrial information	6	3	9
5(f) - Adverse effect on interests of person who provided the information	5	1	6
5(g) - Adverse effect on protection of environment to which information relates	0	0	0
Environmental Exceptions	132	25	157

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.

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 Fol 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 Fol 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 Fol 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 August 2012. This is the latest set of quarterly Freedom of Information statistics to be published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the government department which now has lead responsibility for the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The first eight bulletins in this series were published by the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

The formal monitoring work covers a total of 42 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 second quarter of 2012.

Departments of State

- Attorney General’s Office
- Cabinet Office
- Communities and Local Government
- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Department for Education
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department for International Development
- Department for Transport

Department for Work and Pensions
Department of Energy and Climate Change
Department of Health
Export Credits Guarantee Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
HM Treasury
Home Office
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Justice
Northern Ireland Office
Scotland Office
Wales Office

Other monitored bodies

Charity Commission
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 April 2010 and the end of June 2012, the period covered by the in-year performance and volume tables (Tables A, B and C) in this bulletin.

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

the GEO has sat within the Home Office, and so from Q2 2011 onwards figures for requests received by the Government Equalities Office requests have been included within the Home Office's statistics.

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

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

Cabinet Office

Figures include requests received by the following:

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

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills .

Figures include requests received by the following:

Met Office

Department for Transport

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

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

Department for Work and Pensions

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

Appeals Agency
Disability Carers Service
Jobcentre plus
Pension Service
Rent Service

Department for Culture Media and Sport

Figures include requests received by the Royal Parks Agency.

HM Treasury

Figures include requests received by the Office for Budget Responsibility.

Home Office

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

Ministry of Defence

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

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

Ministry of Justice

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

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 August 2012. They relate to information requests received during the period 1 April to 30 April 2012. The collection of monitoring data began on the 21st working day after the last day of this period (i.e. on 30th July 2012), since 20 working days is the statutory deadline for public authorities to respond to information requests under both the FoI Act and the EIRs.
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 42 central government bodies. At the commencement of the Act in January 2005 there were also 42 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 Q2 2012 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:

Mark Edwardes
Justice Statistics Analytical Services
Ministry of Justice
7th Floor
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ
Tel: 020 3334 3077
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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