

FOI Release
Information released under the Freedom of Information Act

Title: Performance and provision of FOI within BIS

Date of release: 14 May 2013

Information request

- 1) How many freedom of information requests has the department received in each of the years since the Freedom of Information Act came into force?
- 2) In each of those years, how many of those requests were overdue?
- 3) In each of those years, how many members of staff have worked for the FOI team.

Information released

Some of the information that has been requested is held by this Department.

1) and 2)

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) does hold information relevant to these questions. However, under section 21 of the FOI Act, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to you. You can find the information you have requested up until 31st December 2012 on the Ministry of Justice's (MOJ) website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/series/government-foi-statistics>.

The statistics from 1st January 2013 will be published in the future at the same address given above. This information is therefore exempt under section 22 (the information is intended for future publication). Section 22 is a qualified exemption and we have therefore considered the public interest test. There is a public interest in knowing the details of FOI requests as this leads to greater transparency in government. However, given the necessary preparation and administration involved in publishing the information, we consider that, the best use of public resources would be directed to pulling this information together, ensuring the information is accurate and published in a consistent and comprehensive format, rather than in a piecemeal fashion. Having considered

the public interest, the department's decision is to withhold the requested information.

3)

BIS does not hold historical data on FOI staff numbers, and therefore this information is not held. I can however tell you that the current Security & Information Rights (SIR) Unit includes a complement of eight Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts for case advisers (HEO grade) and two FTE posts for team managers (SEO grade) who administer and provide advice on FOI, EIR and subject access requests made under the DPA to staff in BIS. These figures include one current vacancy at HEO grade. There is one FTE post for the Head of the SIR Unit (Grade 7) but please note the wider unit also covers other work as well as information rights. The team also provides a shared service to the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to process and advise on their requests.