



30 January 2007

Request for information

Thank you for your letter dated 27 December in which you requested the following information:

1. Copies of waves 1 to 6 and wave 8 of the Information Rights Tracker Survey reports

Please find enclosed copies of the relevant sections of waves 2 to 6 and wave 8 of the Information Rights Tracker Survey reports. A report was not produced for wave 1 so we do not hold this information.

The Department did not carry out any analysis on the results from the Tracker Survey for waves 2 and 3. A small amount of analysis was carried out on waves 4 to 6, and a fuller analysis of the results were carried out for waves 7 and 8.

2. When and who took the decision to put the survey report on the website and contents of any emails or other communications held by the Ministry of Justice discussing whether to disclose this document to the public

Here is an extract from an email from Ben Connah (Head of Access Rights Unit) on 19 November 2007:

"I'll leave it for Mosun to provide detailed advice when you are drafting the response, but I agree to the approach below. We'll need to make sure that the letter provides sufficient context (eg. on the HRA angle) and that we disclose the information simultaneously on the website. Mosun can provide the webform that's needed".

3. Any e-mails or other communications about the decision not to put the other disclosure (contained in Ministry of Justice letter to Mr X on 30th November 2007) on the website and any reason it took 2 days to make the decision about releasing the request for the freedom of information awareness survey.

The Departmental policy is to disclose information, which is of wider significant public interest. Simultaneous releases tends to take place when disclosing information to journalist to ensure that information released to a single applicant becomes more widely available and benefit the public generally. Turning to your case, the reason for the delay in this instance, was because our main priority was to meet the twenty working days deadline and also to allow enough time for you to receive the information through the post before publishing it on the Departmental website.

You also asked for any e-mail or communication about the decision not to put your other request on the website. I can confirm that we have no emails or communication relevant to this aspect of your request.

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information, you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter by writing to Access Rights Unit, Ministry of Justice, Post Point 6.17, Selborne House, 54 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QW.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

Access Rights Unit

Information Rights Tracker Survey – Key Wave 2 (W2) results

"People have the legal right to get hold of information about the work of a public authority"
83% of respondents said TRUE at W1, **84%** at W2

Awareness of law that allow public access to information held by public authorities in W2
(spontaneous awareness only - respondents could mention more than one item on the list,
which includes deliberate red herrings)

Data Protection Act - **31%** (35% in W1)

Freedom of Information Act - **30%** (33% in W1)

Human Rights Act – **17%** (24% in W1)

Open Government CoP - 6%

Environmental Information Regulations - 7%

Citizens' Charter - 16%

Privacy and Electronic Comms Regulations - 4%

Information Rights Tracker Survey – Key Wave 3 (W3) results

Fieldwork – 1 – 7 December 2005

Factual awareness of information rights

"People have the legal right to get hold of information about the work of a public authority"

83% of respondents said TRUE at W1, 84% at W2, **81% at W3**

Awareness of information rights legislation

Awareness of law that allow public access to information held by public authorities
(spontaneous awareness only - respondents could mention more than one item on the list,
which includes deliberate red herrings)

Data Protection Act - 35% in W1, 31% in W2, **29% in W3**

Freedom of Information Act - 33% in W1, 30% in W2, **26% in W3**

Human Rights Act – 24% in W1, 17% in W2, **15% in W3**

Wave 3 results for less common responses

Open Government CoP - 3%

Environmental Information Regulations - 3%

Citizens' Charter - 9%

Privacy and Electronic Comms Regulations - 2%

Information Rights Tracker Survey – Key Wave 4 (W4) results

W4 Fieldwork – first week of March 2006

Previous Waves in June, September and December 2005

Factual awareness of information rights

"People have the legal right to get hold of information about the work of a public authority"

83% of respondents said TRUE at W1, 84% at W2, 81% at W3, **83% at W4**

Awareness of information rights legislation

Awareness of law that allow public access to information held by public authorities (spontaneous awareness only - respondents could mention more than one item on the list, which includes deliberate red herrings)

Data Protection Act - 35% in W1, 31% in W2, 29% in W3, **27% in W4**

Freedom of Information Act - 33% in W1, 30% in W2, 26% in W3, **24% in W4**

Human Rights Act – 24% in W1, 17% in W2, 15% in W3, **13% at W4**

Wave 4 results for less common responses

Open Government CoP - 2%

Environmental Information Regulations - 1%

Citizens' Charter - 6%

Privacy and Electronic Comms Regulations - 2%

There is a **very clear** trend of reduced awareness in the relevant Acts here. DPA awareness has fallen by 8 percentage points, and FOI Act awareness by 9 percentage points, over the nine-month interval between W1 and W4.

Information Rights Tracker Survey – Key Wave 5 (W5) results

W5 Fieldwork – second and third weeks of July 2006

Previous Waves in June, September and December 2005, and March 2006

Factual awareness of information rights

"People have the legal right to get hold of information about the work of a public authority"

% of respondents answering TRUE in each wave follows:

W1	83%
W2	84%
W3	81%
W4	83%
W5	82%

Awareness of information rights legislation

Awareness of law that allow public access to information held by public authorities (spontaneous awareness only - respondents could mention more than one item on the list, which includes deliberate red herrings)

Data Protection Act

W1	35%
W2	31%
W3	29%
W4	27%
W5	29%

Freedom of Information Act

W1	33%
W2	30%
W3	26%
W4	24%
W5	25%

Human Rights Act

W1	24%
W2	17%
W3	15%
W4	13%
W5	16%

Wave 5 results for less common responses

- Open Government CoP - 3%
- Environmental Information Regulations - 2%
- Citizens' Charter - 8%
- Privacy and Electronic Comms Regulations - 2%

Trends in awareness of the two key Information Rights Acts (FoIA and DPA) have both stabilised after a clear downward trend over the past 12 months.

Information Rights Tracker Survey – Key Wave 6 (W6) results

W6 Fieldwork – April 2007

Previous Waves in June, September and December 2005, March and July 2006

Important Note: The fieldwork for this survey was carried out by BMRB Social Research up to and including the Wave 5 survey. The most recent Wave 6 survey was carried out by another contractor (Ipsos MORI). Although the survey methodology (face-to-face Omnibus) and the question and answer wordings have been retained unchanged as far as possible, there will inevitably be differences in approach (e.g. sampling frames, interviewer coding practices, etc.) between the two contractors. Comparisons between the Wave 6 results and those from earlier Waves should therefore be drawn with caution, bearing these differences in mind.

Please also note that “**don’t know**” answers are disregarded in all percentage calculations unless otherwise stated.

Factual awareness of information rights

"People have the legal right to get hold of information about the work of a public authority"

% of respondents answering TRUE in each wave follows:

W1	83%
W2	84%
W3	81%

W4 83%
W5 82%

W6 83%

Awareness of information rights legislation

Awareness of law that allow public access to information held by public authorities. This measures spontaneous awareness only - respondents could mention more than one item on the list, which includes deliberate red herrings. Because it was possible to give more than answer, nil return / "don't know" responses could not be identified separately in analysis. The percentages below therefore use the total number of respondents to the survey as their denominator.

Data Protection Act

W1 35%
W2 31%
W3 29%
W4 27%
W5 29%

W6 38%

Freedom of Information Act

W1 33%
W2 30%
W3 26%
W4 24%
W5 25%

W6 28%

Human Rights Act

W1 24%
W2 17%
W3 15%
W4 13%
W5 16%

W6 16%

Wave 6 results for less common responses

Open Government CoP - 5%
Environmental Information Regulations - 3%
Citizens' Charter - 7%
Privacy and Electronic Comms Regulations - 2%

Trends in awareness of the two key Information Rights Acts (FoIA and DPA) have both stabilised after a clear downward trend over the past 12 months. Indeed, there has been an apparent sharp upward surge in DPA awareness, although this may be an anomalous result.

Information Rights Tracker Survey – Key Wave 8 (W8) results

Wave 8 fieldwork:

15-22 November 2007. Sample: 1,788 adults aged 16 and over in England and Wales.

Previous waves:

Wave 1 – June 2005 Wave 5 – July 2006
 Wave 2 – September 2005 Wave 6 – March 2007
 Wave 3 – December 2005 Wave 7 – July 2007
 Wave 4 – March 2006

Important Note: The fieldwork for this survey was carried out by BMRB Social Research up to and including the Wave 5 survey. The more recent Waves 6 to 8 surveys were carried out by another contractor (Ipsos MORI). Although the survey methodology (face-to-face Omnibus) and the question and answer wordings have been retained unchanged as far as possible, there will inevitably be differences in approach (e.g. sampling frames, interviewer coding practices, etc.) between the two contractors. Comparisons between the Waves 6 to 8 results and those from earlier Waves should therefore be drawn with caution, bearing these differences in mind.

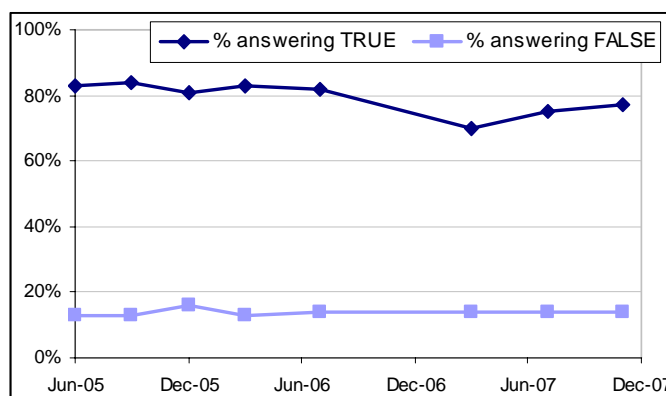
Please also note that “**don’t know**” answers are included in all percentage calculations.

1. Factual awareness of information rights

"People have the legal right to get hold of information about the work of a public authority"

% of respondents answering in each wave:

	TRUE	FALSE	DON'T KNOW
W1	83%	13%	4%
W2	84%	13%	4%
W3	81%	16%	3%
W4	83%	13%	4%
W5	82%	14%	4%
W6	70%	14%	16%
W7	75%	14%	11%
W8	77%	14%	9%



The proportion of respondents who knew (or guessed) that this statement is "True" dropped noticeably in Wave 6. This did, however, coincide with a greater proportion of respondents answering "Don't know" and it seems likely that this is a factor resulting from the change in contractor and possible differences in approach in Wave 6, rather than a genuine change in public awareness. The Waves 7 and 8 results show that over the past year the proportion of people believing that this statement is "True" has increased, suggesting an increasing awareness of rights to obtain information from public authorities. The proportion who incorrectly thought that this statement is "False" has stayed steady throughout at about 14% (roughly 1 in 7 people).

The Wave 8 results also provide information on demographic differences in factual awareness of freedom of information rights.

- There did not seem to be a marked difference in awareness depending on the age of respondents. In the previous wave, adults in the main "working age population", ages 25-64, had a clearly higher level of awareness of their rights to obtain information from public authorities than those outside this age range. However, the difference was only very marginal in the Wave 8 results.
- There was a markedly greater level of information rights awareness from respondents in social classes AB and C1 compared to those in social classes C2 and DE. 83% of respondents in the former category thought that the statement above is "True", compared to 70% in the latter.
- There was a greater level of awareness from readers of "quality" newspapers compared to the readership of the "popular" press.

4. Awareness of information rights legislation

What laws are you aware of, if any, that give people rights to obtain information from public authorities?

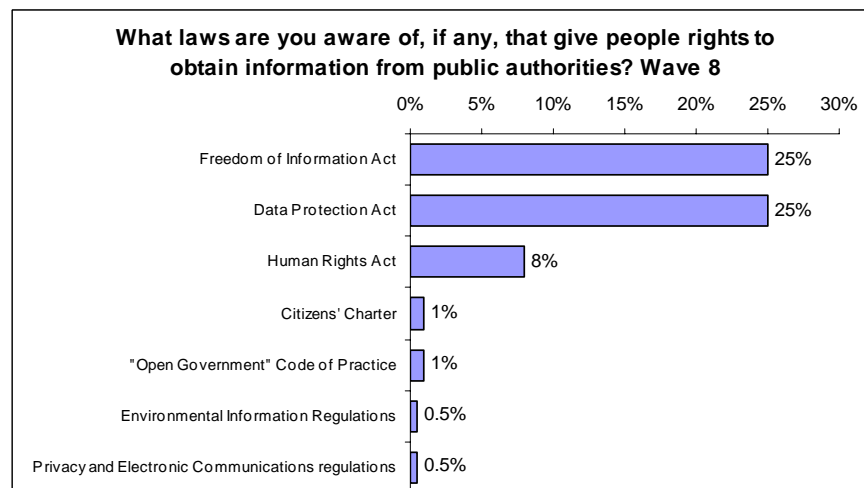
(Unprompted question; all applicable answers coded, so respondents could mention more than one item on the list)

The previous questions did not name the Data Protection Act or Freedom of Information Act by name when asking about awareness of, and attitude to, information rights. This question asked about awareness of the specific laws that allow public access to information held by public authorities. Interviewers recorded which, if any, items of legislation respondents mentioned in their response to this question.

	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6	W7	W8
Freedom of Information Act	30	26	24	25	28	26	25%
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Data Protection Act	31	29	27	29	38	25	25%
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Human Rights Act	17	15	13	16	16	8%	8%
	%	%	%	%	%		
Citizens' Charter	10	9%	6%	8%	7%	2%	1%
	%						

"Open Government" Code of Practice	4%	3%	2%	3%	5%	1%	1%
Environmental Information Regulations	4%	3%	1%	2%	3%	1%	0.5%
Privacy and Electronic Communications regulations	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	0.5%
Others	5%	7%	7%	7%	1%	3%	3%
Don't know / unable to name any relevant item	46%	48%	48%	45%	42%	52%	53%

(Wave 1 results not shown to save space on the page)



Responses varied considerably by age. Awareness of the Freedom of Information Act was highest among adults in the 35-64 age range; about one third (32%) of these surveyed mentioned the FOIA in their answer compared to 19% of younger and older people. Adults aged 16-24 had a particularly low awareness (15% mentioned it), which supports the finding in section 1 of the low awareness of the right to obtain information from public authorities by people in this age group. Awareness of the Data Protection Act was overall at about the same level as the FOIA, but was particularly low among adults in the over 65 age range, with just 14% mentioning it in their answer. Meanwhile people aged 16-24 had much higher awareness of the DPA than the FOIA, with 28% of them naming the former in their answer.

Awareness of information rights legislation, in particular the FOI Act, was significantly greater among social class AB and C1 respondents than in the C2 and DE groupings, and significantly greater among "quality" newspaper readers than the "popular" press – both findings reflecting the results of earlier waves.