



Ministry  
of Justice



# **Freedom of Information Statistics: Implementation in Central Government**

## **January - March 2013**

Ministry of Justice  
Statistics bulletin

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## Executive summary

*The Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows individuals to request information from public bodies. This bulletin presents statistics for its use in 41 central government bodies, i.e. 21 Departments of State and 20 'other monitored bodies', in the first quarter of 2013 (January-March).*

### **Number of requests** [see Tables A1 & A2]

In the first quarter of 2013 monitored central government bodies received a total of 13,712 non-routine Freedom of Information Act (FOI) requests. This is a 3 per cent fall on the record number received in Q1 2012, but a 13 per cent increase from Q4 2012, consistent with previous first quarter spikes.

The number of FOI and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) requests recorded by monitored bodies has shown an increasing trend from 2006 to 2012 – an average increase of 7 per cent per year. The increase has been driven by requests to Departments of State. There is some evidence this trend has levelled off in recent quarters.

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

89 per cent of the requests during Q1 2013 received a response within the statutory deadline or were subject to a permitted deadline extension, a slight decrease on 90 per cent in the previous quarter and 94 per cent in Q1 2012. The range of timeliness for all monitored bodies was between 50 and 100 per cent.

### **Initial outcomes of requests** [see Tables A5 & A6]

Of all requests received during Q1 2013 where it was possible to make a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought, 55 per cent were granted in full and 27 per cent were withheld in full. The remainder were granted in part or the response has not yet been provided.

The percentage of requests granted in full remained the same as the previous quarter, although there was a slight increase from 53 per cent in Q1 2012.

### **Exemptions and exceptions** [see Table A7]

In Q1 2013, one or more exemption or exception was applied to 2,698 requests, which is 27 per cent of all resolvable requests. The most common exemption, as in previous quarters, was section 40 (personal data).

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## Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and the associated Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) came fully into force on 1 January 2005. This bulletin presents statistics on their implementation within central government for the quarterly period January to March 2013.

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

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/series/government-foi-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/series/government-foi-statistics)

[webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/freedomofinformationquarterly-archive.htm](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 – i.e. FOI or EIR - information requests.** However, requests for information that is already reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means should not be included in this publication. Annex B gives a complete definition of a non-routine request, and other information on the scope of these statistics. The number of ‘routine’ information requests is not known. Figures in this publication should be considered a lower bound for all information requests received by the monitored bodies.

This bulletin presents monitoring statistics for a total of 41 central government bodies, including all major departments of state. Annex C gives a full list of monitored bodies<sup>1</sup>. Over 100,000 bodies are subject to the FOI Act<sup>2</sup> and a substantial number of FOI requests are sent to those which are non-monitored. The trends which apply to monitored central government bodies cannot be assumed to apply universally.

More information regarding EIRs is available via the link below.

[archive.defra.gov.uk/corporate/policy/opengov/eir/](http://archive.defra.gov.uk/corporate/policy/opengov/eir/)

### Departmental name changes

Please refer to Annex C for full details of departmental name changes that have occurred since Q1 2011, the period covered by the tables in this bulletin.

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

<sup>2</sup> [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo060725/text/60725w0081.htm#06072811011026](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo060725/text/60725w0081.htm#06072811011026)

# Results

## Number of requests [see Tables A1 & A2]

In January to March (Q1) 2013 the monitored central government bodies received a total of 13,712 non-routine FOI (Freedom of Information Act) requests, 3 per cent fewer than in Q1 of 2012 but 13 per cent more than the previous quarter.

Figure 1 shows that, despite considerable quarter-on-quarter variation, there has been a generally increasing trend in the number of requests received over the past five years. There is some evidence that this trend has levelled off, since each of the past three quarters has been smaller than the corresponding three quarters the year before. Q1 does continue the trend of high numbers of FOI numbers received in the first quarter of the year.

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

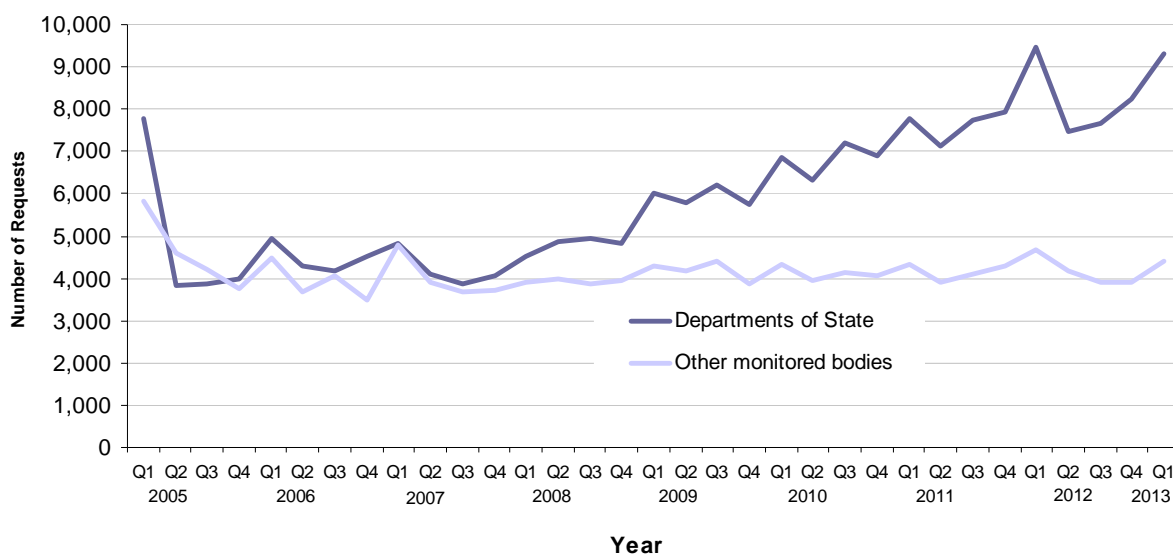


Figure 1 shows that the increase in requests over the past 5 years has been driven by an increase to Departments of State. Departments of State reported receiving a total of 9,312 information requests in Q1 2013, 1 per cent fewer than Q1 2012 and 13 per cent more than the previous quarter. Other monitored bodies reported having received 4,400 requests, a fall of 6 per cent on Q1 2012 and a rise of 13 per cent on the previous quarter.

Departments of State accounted for 68 per cent of all requests received by monitored bodies in Q1 of 2013, the same percentage as Q4 2012.

Of the Departments of State, the Department for Work and Pensions reported having received 1,457 requests during Q1, the highest departmental total. The other departments that received more than 1,000 requests were the Home Office with 1,129 and the Ministry of Justice with 1,083. The departments with the biggest changes since

Q1 2013 were the Department for Health who received 510 (47%) fewer requests in Q1 2013 than Q1 2012 and the Home Office who received 206 (22%) more requests. This may be a product of topical events: for example, the Department for Health identified receiving many requests in relation to NHS risk registers in Q1 2012. The department with the biggest change since Q4 2012 is the Ministry of Justice with 302 more requests (39%). The Ministry of Justice also attributed this to requests from high profile news stories – for example, requests concerning Halal meat in prisons. The National Archives had an increase of 221 requests (34%) over the same period.

Among other monitored bodies, the Health and Safety Executive reported having received 1,657 requests during Q1, while the National Archives received 864. The Health and Safety Executive is the only monitored body to have received more than 1,000 requests during each quarter since the Act was implemented. This is partly due to the nature of requests it receives: a large percentage are from solicitors representing an injured party, seeking disclosure of information collected during an investigation of a workplace incident. These two bodies combined account for nearly 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 390 such requests during the first quarter of 2013, accounting for 3 per cent of all requests received. The number of requests handled under EIR is down 17 per cent on the previous quarter and 11 per cent on Q1 2012.

FOIA applies to over 100,000 public bodies<sup>3</sup>, including all local authorities and schools. The 41 monitored bodies covered in this bulletin represent an unknown fraction of the volume of FOI requests made.

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

Timeliness statistics give a measure of how well monitored bodies are complying with the Act. The FOI Act requires most public bodies to respond to written requests for information within 20 working days of receipt. There are limited exceptions to the 20 working day deadline. The 20 day deadline does not apply to requests subject to the consideration of public interest. 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

Across all monitored bodies, 85 per cent of requests received during Q1 of 2013 were sent a response within the 20 (or 30 for the National Archives) working day deadline – down from 86 per cent in Q4 2012 and 90 per cent in Q1 2012. 89 per cent of the requests received during Q1 of 2013 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 90 per cent from Q4 2012, and the peak of 94 per cent in Q1 2012. The range of timeliness for monitored bodies within the standard deadline was 46

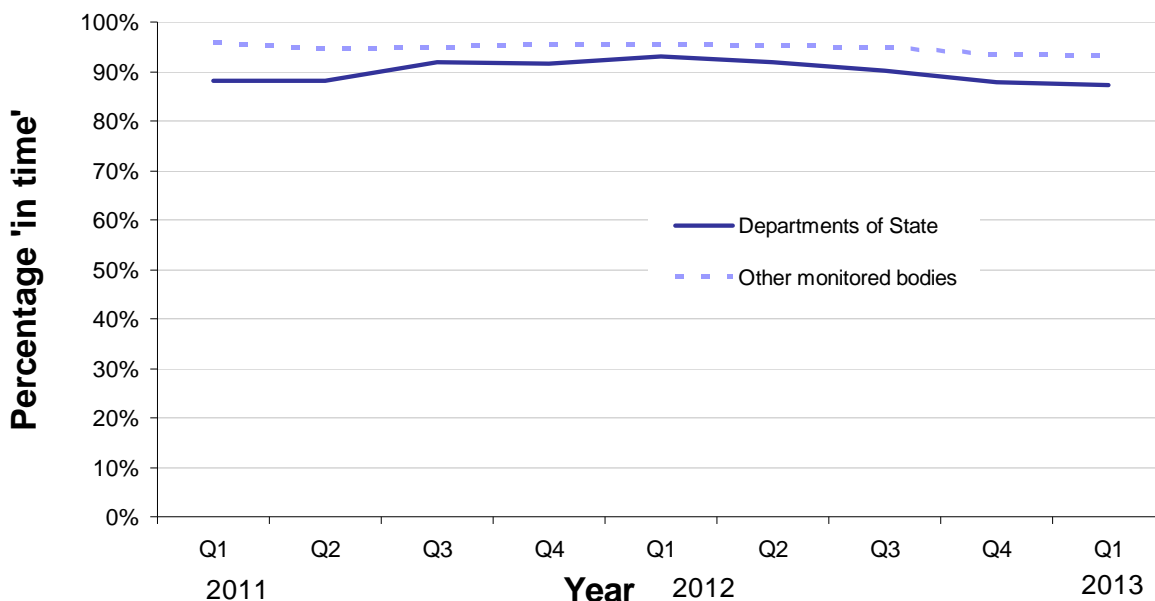
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<sup>3</sup>[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo060725/text/60725w0081.htm#060728110110](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo060725/text/60725w0081.htm#060728110110)

per cent to 100 per cent. Between 50 per cent and 100 per cent of requests were 'in time'.

Figure 2 shows that despite the rise in requests, average timeliness for monitored bodies has been above 85 per cent for the last three years. Figure 2 illustrates that other monitored bodies are on average more timely than Departments of State

**Figure 2: Percentage of FOI requests replied to 'in time' by Departments of State and other monitored bodies by quarter from Q1 2011**



**Initial outcomes of requests [see Tables A5 & A6]**

It may not be possible for government to resolve a request in full if the information sought is not held, further information is needed to be able to answer a request, or because a fee has been requested but has not been paid. Of the 13,712 requests reported during Q1 of 2013 across all monitored bodies, the following were not resolvable:

- 73 were 'on hold' awaiting a fee payment;
- 2,573 requests sought information that was not held;
- 887 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 10,179 (74 per cent) 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 2013,

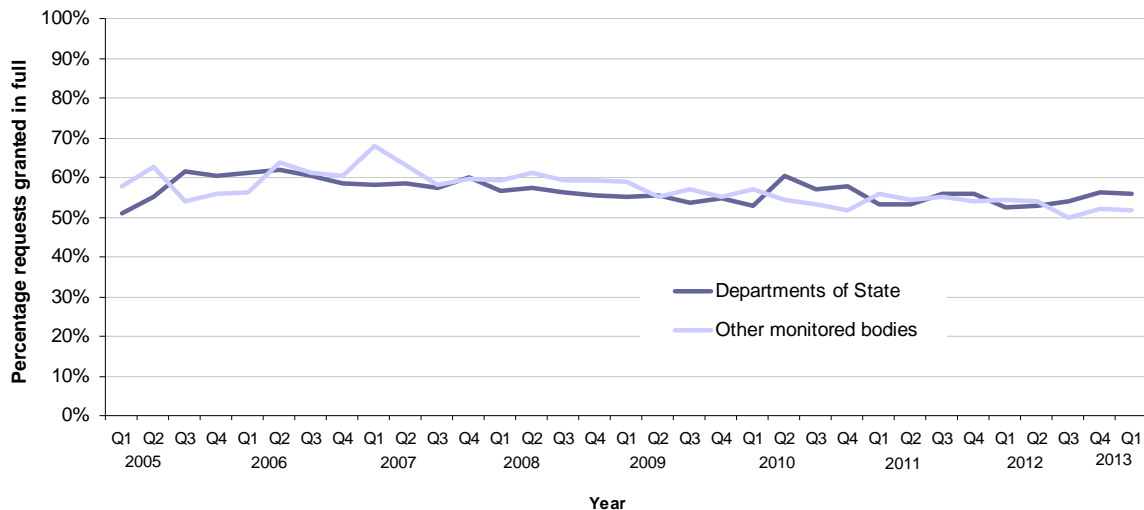
- 55 per cent were granted in full, the same as the previous quarter and up from 53 per cent in Q1 2012;



- 12 per cent were withheld in part, down from 13 per cent in Q4 and Q1 of 2012;
- 27 per cent were withheld in full; the same as in Q4 2012 but down from 30 per cent in Q1 2012

Figure 3 shows the proportion of requests granted in full has slowly reduced since the act was introduced. This may reflect the changing nature of requests as the monitored bodies have made more routine information available to the public. This could be because more requests are for exempt material or it may be an artificial trend due to the exclusion of requests for easily accessible material from the statistics. This would lead to a greater proportion of withheld requests as a proportion of included requests. Due to an increase in the number of requests received, the absolute number of requests granted in full and in part has increased.

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



### Use of exemptions and exceptions [see Table A7]

Under the FOI Act, a public authority can only refuse to provide requested information that it holds if the request is considered vexatious or repeated, the cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit, or if the information falls in one or more of the categories of exempt information ('exemptions') listed in Part II of the Act<sup>4</sup>. Similar arrangements apply to certain types of information under the EIRs.

Across all monitored bodies, a total of 2,698 requests (27% of resolvable requests) were reported as having one or more of these exemptions or exceptions applied to them during Q1. This means that government has the requested information, but held withheld some or all of it under an exemption listed in the Act.

The most commonly applied exemptions or exceptions in Q1 2013 were:

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

- Section 40 of the FOI Act (relating to personal information), which was applied to 1,251 requests, and in 46 per cent of all exempt requests;
- Section 22 (information intended for future publication), which was applied to 241 requests and in 9 per cent of all exempt requests;
- Section 43 (commercial interests), which was applied to 238 requests and in 9 per cent of all exempt requests.

These exemptions are typically among the most frequent exemptions used.

## Annex A: Statistical Tables

### Latest quarterly (A1, A3, A5, A7) and in-year (A2, A4, A6) tables

Table A1	<i>Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January – 31 March 2013, and their status at time of monitoring</i>
Table A2	<i>Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 January 2011</i>
Table A3	<i>Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January – 31 March 2013</i>
Table A4	<i>Proportion of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were answered 'in time', by quarter, since 1 January 2011</i>
Table A5	<i>Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January – 31 March 2013</i>
Table A6	<i>Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 January 2011</i>
Table A7	<i>Exemptions and exceptions applied by monitored bodies when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 January – 31 March 2013</i>

### Symbols and conventions

-	Not applicable
0	Nil
*	Percentage not supplied because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer
#	Figures supplied by these departments of state count non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well as those received by the departments themselves. Annex C gives full details
†	Government body changed during monitoring period. See Annex C

TABLE A1

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 January - 31 March 2013, and their status at time of monitoring

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring			
		Processed	On hold <sup>1</sup> or lapsed <sup>1</sup>	Still being processed	Number handled under EIRs <sup>2</sup>
<b>TOTAL for all monitored bodies</b>	<b>13,712</b>	<b>12,951</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>390</b>
<b>TOTAL for Departments of State only</b>	<b>9,312</b>	<b>8,786</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>TOTAL for other monitored bodies</b>	<b>4,400</b>	<b>4,165</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>196</b>
<b><i>Departments of State</i></b>					
Attorney General's Office	53	50	0	3	0
Cabinet Office #	452	409	0	43	0
Communities and Local Government	247	235	0	12	29
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	227	221	0	6	6
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	136	126	0	10	6
Department for Education	476	458	0	18	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	176	163	0	13	49
Department for International Development	106	105	0	1	2
Department for Transport #	873	857	0	16	39
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,457	1,448	0	9	1
Department of Energy and Climate Change	168	165	0	3	59
Department of Health	567	564	0	3	0
Export Credits Guarantee Department	27	24	0	3	1
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	285	255	0	30	1
HM Treasury #	779	771	0	8	0
Home Office #	1,129	880	0	249	0
Ministry of Defence #	940	868	0	72	1
Ministry of Justice #	1,083	1,060	0	23	0
Northern Ireland Office	56	56	0	0	0
Scotland Office	41	37	0	4	0
Wales Office	34	34	0	0	0

**TABLE A1 continued**

**Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 January - 31 March 2013 and their status at time of monitoring**

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring			Number handled under EIRs <sup>2</sup>
		Processed	On hold <sup>1</sup> or lapsed <sup>1</sup>	Still being processed	
<b><i>Other bodies included in monitoring</i></b>					
Charity Commission	173	173	0	0	0
Crown Prosecution Service	181	166	0	15	0
Debt Management Office	13	13	0	0	0
Food Standards Agency	98	95	0	3	0
Health and Safety Executive	1,657	1,595	0	62	85
HM Land Registry	98	97	0	1	0
HM Revenue and Customs	518	516	0	2	0
National Archives	864	722	73	69	3
National Savings and Investments	30	30	0	0	0
Office for National Statistics	73	69	0	4	0
Office for Standards in Education	166	165	0	1	0
Office of Fair Trading	96	96	0	0	0
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	56	56	0	0	22
Office of Rail Regulation	45	45	0	0	0
Ordnance Survey	15	14	0	1	0
Royal Mint	5	5	0	0	0
Rural Payments Agency	109	109	0	0	83
Serious Fraud Office	28	24	0	4	0
Treasury Solicitor's Department	141	141	0	0	0
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	34	34	0	0	3

**Notes**

1 - Requests 'on hold' are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received at the time of monitoring. These requests are effectively suspended since public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made. Where a fee is charged and the deadline for payment expires, the request is deemed to have 'lapsed' as no further action is required from the public authority.

2 - The amended Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) came into force on 1 January 2005 to coincide with the FoI Act. For further information on the EIRs, see the main notes section of this publication.

TABLE A2

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

Government body	Number of non-routine information requests received								
	2011				2012				2013
	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
<b>TOTAL for all monitored bodies</b>	<b>12,128</b>	<b>11,029</b>	<b>11,829</b>	<b>12,221</b>	<b>14,116</b>	<b>11,634</b>	<b>11,563</b>	<b>12,159</b>	<b>13,712</b>
<b>TOTAL for Departments of State only</b>	<b>7,783</b>	<b>7,124</b>	<b>7,738</b>	<b>7,942</b>	<b>9,452</b>	<b>7,468</b>	<b>7,646</b>	<b>8,251</b>	<b>9,312</b>
<b>TOTAL for other monitored bodies</b>	<b>4,345</b>	<b>3,905</b>	<b>4,091</b>	<b>4,279</b>	<b>4,664</b>	<b>4,166</b>	<b>3,917</b>	<b>3,908</b>	<b>4,400</b>
<b>Departments of State</b>									
Attorney General's Office	31	42	36	44	49	48	21	43	53
Cabinet Office #	395	349	426	509	492	378	357	378	452
Communities and Local Government	250	221	242	230	179	168	241	193	247
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	293	256	273	229	299	231	247	232	227
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	142	195	161	177	184	185	128	122	136
Department for Education	328	245	289	287	349	313	332	315	476
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	183	150	166	164	200	179	147	170	176
Department for International Development	110	122	125	125	117	106	80	105	106
Department for Transport #	898	710	812	778	892	713	701	836	873
Department for Work and Pensions #	877	763	937	927	1,326	1,005	1,156	1,282	1,457
Department of Energy and Climate Change	125	115	131	159	216	144	147	197	168
Department of Health	617	417	478	433	1,077	417	430	483	567
Export Credits Guarantee Department	23	36	18	21	27	18	9	10	27
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	367	344	292	348	390	336	279	332	285
Government Equalities Office †	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HM Treasury #	356	480	654	688	759	624	713	679	779
Home Office #	866	786	813	867	923	900	973	1,110	1,129
Ministry of Defence #	957	830	930	877	914	844	817	853	940
Ministry of Justice #	847	901	835	933	910	757	757	781	1,083
Northern Ireland Office	37	61	51	60	58	46	49	53	56
Scotland Office	18	54	35	48	43	30	25	40	41
Wales Office	42	47	34	38	48	26	37	37	34

TABLE A2 continued

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

Government body	Number of non-routine information requests received									
	2011				2012				2013	
	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	
<b>Other bodies included in monitoring</b>										
Central Office of Information †	12	10	7	11	-	-	-	-	-	
Charity Commission	268	276	293	306	322	219	146	127	173	
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission †	70	79	59	68	75	65	-	-	-	
Crown Prosecution Service	104	100	132	117	162	141	171	142	181	
Debt Management Office	18	11	11	12	17	15	9	6	13	
Food Standards Agency	30	24	32	28	36	49	25	34	98	
Health and Safety Executive	1,757	1,620	1,637	1,603	1,795	1,599	1,617	1,641	1,657	
HM Land Registry	61	57	46	60	72	79	55	88	98	
HM Revenue and Customs	429	461	461	443	611	501	447	524	518	
National Archives	756	506	715	929	750	743	720	643	864	
National Savings and Investments	26	29	24	23	30	25	17	21	30	
Office for National Statistics	89	60	62	59	43	46	67	71	73	
Office for Standards in Education	241	208	172	169	212	183	140	162	166	
Office of Fair Trading	132	107	114	81	111	72	92	105	96	
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	30	38	26	38	45	41	52	64	56	
Office of Rail Regulation	47	42	41	95	44	39	39	31	45	
Ordnance Survey	23	28	31	22	29	22	23	17	15	
Royal Mint	4	4	5	4	5	16	4	4	5	
Rural Payments Agency	105	101	118	97	118	121	117	99	109	
Serious Fraud Office	24	26	22	15	25	36	21	37	28	
Treasury Solicitor's Department	101	89	65	79	131	135	133	66	141	
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	18	29	18	20	31	19	22	26	34	

**TABLE A3**

**Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January - 31 March 2013**

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed <sup>1</sup> )	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 <sup>2</sup> to 20-day deadline	Late response (i.e. 20-day deadline missed)		
<b>TOTAL for all monitored bodies</b>	<b>13,639</b>	<b>11,604</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>1,506</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>TOTAL for Departments of State only</b>	<b>9,312</b>	<b>7,734</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>1,199</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>87%</b>
<b>TOTAL for other monitored bodies</b>	<b>4,327</b>	<b>3,870</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>93%</b>
<i>Departments of State</i>						
Attorney General's Office	53	50	3	0	94%	100%
Cabinet Office #	452	334	56	62	74%	86%
Communities and Local Government	247	182	32	33	74%	87%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	227	205	14	8	90%	96%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	136	121	14	1	89%	99%
Department for Education	476	412	12	52	87%	89%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	176	142	14	20	81%	89%
Department for International Development	106	101	4	1	95%	99%
Department for Transport #	873	822	14	37	94%	96%
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,457	1,327	9	121	91%	92%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	168	151	12	5	90%	97%
Department of Health	567	557	8	2	98%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	27	21	0	6	78%	78%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	285	207	65	13	73%	95%
HM Treasury #	779	737	26	16	95%	98%
Home Office #	1,129	518	51	560	46%	50%
Ministry of Defence #	940	749	39	152	80%	84%
Ministry of Justice #	1,083	976	1	106	90%	90%
Northern Ireland Office	56	53	1	2	95%	96%
Scotland Office	41	35	4	2	85%	95%
Wales Office	34	34	0	0	100%	100%



**TABLE A3 continued**

**Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January - 31 March 2013**

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed <sup>1</sup> )	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 <sup>2</sup> to 20-day deadline	Late response (i.e. 20-day deadline missed)		
<b>Other bodies included in monitoring</b>						
Charity Commission	173	156	1	16	90%	91%
Crown Prosecution Service	181	139	0	42	77%	77%
Debt Management Office	13	13	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	98	82	16	0	84%	100%
Health and Safety Executive	1,657	1,471	39	147	89%	91%
HM Land Registry	98	97	0	1	99%	99%
HM Revenue and Customs	518	474	1	43	92%	92%
National Archives <sup>3</sup>	791	691	84	16	87%	98%
National Savings and Investments	30	29	0	1	97%	97%
Office for National Statistics	73	64	0	9	88%	88%
Office for Standards in Education	166	156	3	7	94%	96%
Office of Fair Trading	96	93	0	3	97%	97%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	56	49	0	7	88%	88%
Office of Rail Regulation	45	41	2	2	91%	96%
Ordnance Survey	15	13	2	0	*	*
Royal Mint	5	4	0	1	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	109	108	0	1	99%	99%
Serious Fraud Office	28	20	2	6	71%	79%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	141	138	0	3	98%	98%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	34	32	0	2	94%	94%

**Notes**

1 - Requests 'on hold' or 'lapsed' are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received. These requests are effectively suspended since public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made. They are therefore excluded from the calculation of timeliness measures.

2 - Permitted extensions include: extensions under the FOI Act to allow for consideration of the balance of the public interest, and extensions under the EIR because of the complexity or volume of the request.

3 - Although the standard statutory deadline for responding to an information request is 20 working days, a 30-day deadline applies where requests relate wholly or partly to archived information. The National Archives' timeliness figures are therefore reported on this basis.

TABLE A4

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

Government body	Percentage of non-routine information requests that were answered 'in time' <sup>1</sup>								
	2011				2012				2013
	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
<b>TOTAL for all monitored bodies</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>89%</b>
<b>TOTAL for Departments of State only</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>87%</b>
<b>TOTAL for other monitored bodies</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>Departments of State</b>									
Attorney General's Office	100%	98%	100%	100%	96%	100%	95%	98%	100%
Cabinet Office #	42%	55%	85%	92%	93%	92%	93%	95%	86%
Communities and Local Government	96%	93%	92%	96%	94%	96%	92%	91%	87%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	93%	83%	88%	93%	93%	98%	99%	96%	96%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	99%	100%	100%	99%	98%	100%	100%	100%	99%
Department for Education	72%	87%	81%	75%	78%	84%	74%	82%	89%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	91%	92%	93%	84%	91%	92%	93%	96%	89%
Department for International Development	98%	99%	98%	98%	100%	99%	98%	99%	99%
Department for Transport #	92%	91%	93%	92%	95%	96%	96%	95%	96%
Department for Work and Pensions #	98%	95%	96%	93%	89%	85%	83%	79%	92%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	89%	91%	87%	97%	95%	97%	96%	96%	97%
Department of Health	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	78%	69%	*	100%	93%	*	*	*	78%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	95%	94%	92%	95%	91%	91%	96%	93%	95%
Government Equalities Office †	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HM Treasury #	98%	98%	98%	98%	99%	95%	99%	96%	98%
Home Office #	95%	96%	96%	88%	93%	89%	84%	72%	50%
Ministry of Defence #	76%	81%	84%	85%	89%	90%	86%	87%	84%
Ministry of Justice #	84%	75%	86%	91%	92%	92%	92%	90%	90%
Northern Ireland Office	97%	98%	96%	87%	67%	87%	96%	98%	96%
Scotland Office	*	98%	100%	98%	98%	93%	100%	90%	95%
Wales Office	90%	83%	97%	95%	96%	85%	59%	86%	100%

**TABLE A4 continued**

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

Government body	Percentage of non-routine information requests that were answered 'in time' <sup>1</sup>									
	2011				2012				2013	
	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	
<b>Other bodies included in monitoring</b>										
Central Office of Information †	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	-
Charity Commission	97%	91%	94%	95%	97%	95%	90%	96%	91%	
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission †	99%	100%	98%	99%	97%	98%	-	-	-	
Crown Prosecution Service	93%	92%	89%	90%	97%	93%	90%	85%	77%	
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	100%	100%	97%	96%	100%	98%	100%	100%	100%	
Health and Safety Executive	93%	94%	95%	94%	94%	94%	95%	93%	91%	
HM Land Registry	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	97%	100%	98%	99%	
HM Revenue and Customs	94%	92%	90%	92%	92%	92%	90%	90%	92%	
National Archives <sup>2</sup>	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	99%	98%	98%	98%	
National Savings and Investments	100%	93%	100%	91%	100%	96%	*	95%	97%	
Office for National Statistics	100%	78%	84%	86%	95%	83%	93%	80%	88%	
Office for Standards in Education	100%	99%	98%	98%	100%	99%	97%	96%	96%	
Office of Fair Trading	95%	98%	96%	96%	98%	100%	99%	92%	97%	
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	90%	87%	92%	89%	91%	88%	92%	97%	88%	
Office of Rail Regulation	96%	100%	95%	98%	86%	92%	95%	97%	96%	
Ordnance Survey	91%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	*	*	
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	100%	93%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	
Serious Fraud Office	92%	100%	55%	*	92%	86%	76%	76%	79%	
Treasury Solicitor's Department	99%	99%	100%	99%	98%	99%	95%	100%	98%	
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	*	86%	*	*	94%	*	100%	69%	94%	

**Notes**

1 - A request is 'in time' if it was answered within the statutory response deadline, or within a permitted extension to this deadline. Permitted extensions include extensions under the FOI Act to allow for consideration of the balance of the public interest, and extensions under the EIR because of the complexity or volume of the request. Requests 'on hold' or 'lapsed' are excluded from the calculation of timeliness measures. These requests are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received and so public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made.

2 - Although the standard statutory deadline for responding to an information request is 20 working days, a 30-day deadline applies where requests relate wholly or partly to archived information. The National Archives' timeliness figures are therefore reported on this basis.

**TABLE A5**  
**Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January - 31 March 2013**

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed <sup>1</sup> )	Requests where advice and assistance <sup>2</sup> provided	Requests where information not held	Total 'resolvable' requests <sup>3</sup>	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 <sup>4</sup>	Response not yet provided <sup>5</sup>		
<b>TOTAL for all monitored bodies</b>	<b>13,639</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>2,573</b>	<b>10,179</b>	<b>5,555</b>	<b>1,231</b>	<b>2,705</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>TOTAL for Departments of State only</b>	<b>9,312</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>1,708</b>	<b>6,979</b>	<b>3,900</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>1,837</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>TOTAL for other monitored bodies</b>	<b>4,327</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>3,200</b>	<b>1,655</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>868</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Departments of State</b>										
Attorney General's Office	53	0	23	30	16	7	4	3	53%	13%
Cabinet Office #	452	48	149	255	59	36	117	43	23%	46%
Communities and Local Government	247	0	54	193	118	42	21	12	61%	11%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	227	12	69	146	63	32	45	6	43%	31%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	136	7	41	88	39	14	25	10	44%	28%
Department for Education	476	24	69	383	258	36	71	18	67%	19%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	176	14	42	120	63	23	21	13	53%	18%
Department for International Development	106	2	13	91	67	10	13	1	74%	14%
Department for Transport #	873	15	183	675	507	62	90	16	75%	13%
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,457	3	56	1,398	1,064	43	282	9	76%	20%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	168	5	55	108	45	26	34	3	42%	31%
Department of Health	567	17	164	386	220	34	129	3	57%	33%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	27	0	2	25	14	3	5	3	56%	20%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	285	23	54	208	47	69	62	30	23%	30%
HM Treasury #	779	151	238	390	173	26	183	8	44%	47%
Home Office #	1,129	148	172	809	303	89	168	249	37%	21%
Ministry of Defence #	940	48	130	762	470	48	172	72	62%	23%
Ministry of Justice #	1,083	98	168	817	310	107	377	23	38%	46%
Northern Ireland Office	56	1	15	40	19	5	16	0	48%	40%
Scotland Office	41	9	2	30	21	4	1	4	70%	3%
Wales Office	34	0	9	25	24	0	1	0	96%	4%

**TABLE A5 continued**  
**Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 January - 31 March 2013**

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed <sup>1</sup> )	Requests where advice and assistance <sup>2</sup> provided	Requests where information not held	Total 'resolvable' requests <sup>3</sup>	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 <sup>4</sup>	Response not yet provided <sup>5</sup>		
<b>Other bodies included in monitoring</b>										
Charity Commission	173	12	31	130	69	38	23	0	53%	18%
Crown Prosecution Service	181	18	40	123	57	7	44	15	46%	36%
Debt Management Office	13	0	2	11	10	1	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	98	2	19	77	29	32	13	3	38%	17%
Health and Safety Executive	1,657	59	556	1,042	504	211	265	62	48%	25%
HM Land Registry	98	5	6	87	75	9	2	1	86%	2%
HM Revenue and Customs	518	21	59	438	167	21	248	2	38%	57%
National Archives	791	87	69	635	401	68	97	69	63%	15%
National Savings and Investments	30	0	2	28	24	0	4	0	86%	14%
Office for National Statistics	73	0	10	63	58	0	1	4	92%	2%
Office for Standards in Education	166	12	14	140	45	46	48	1	32%	34%
Office of Fair Trading	96	8	1	87	28	8	51	0	32%	59%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	56	3	6	47	32	10	5	0	68%	11%
Office of Rail Regulation	45	14	7	24	12	6	6	0	50%	25%
Ordnance Survey	15	0	5	10	8	1	0	1	*	*
Royal Mint	5	1	0	4	2	1	1	0	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	109	18	3	88	65	18	5	0	74%	6%
Serious Fraud Office	28	0	5	23	13	2	4	4	57%	17%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	141	2	22	117	37	32	48	0	32%	41%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	34	0	8	26	19	4	3	0	73%	12%

**Notes**

1 - Requests 'on hold' or 'lapsed' are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received. These requests are effectively suspended since public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made.

2 - 'Advice and assistance' would be provided to a requester when the body 'reasonably requires further information in order to identify and locate the information requested'. See section 1(3) of the Freedom of Information Act for further details.

3 - 'Resolvable requests' are all those where it is possible to make a substantive decision on whether to release the requested information. They exclude requests which are 'lapsed' or 'on-hold', where the information was not held, and where it was necessary to provide advice and assistance since in each of these cases it would not have been possible to resolve the request in the form it was asked.

4 - 'Fully withheld' requests include those which were refused because it was estimated that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

5 - This table counts as 'resolvable' all requests where a response has not yet been provided. This assumption is likely to be generally true but may be incorrect in a small number of cases.

It should also be noted that requests where a response has not yet been provided are more likely to involve considerations which are complex and finely balanced. As a result, it cannot be assumed that these requests will be granted and refused in the same proportions as 'resolvable' requests in general.

TABLE A6

Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 January 2011<sup>1</sup>

Government body	Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests that were granted in full									
	2011				2012				2013	
	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	
<b>TOTAL for all monitored bodies</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>55%</b>	
<b>TOTAL for Departments of State only</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>56%</b>	
<b>TOTAL for other monitored bodies</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>52%</b>	
<b>Departments of State</b>										
Attorney General's Office	*	*	*	*	*	29%	*	*	53%	
Cabinet Office #	12%	23%	42%	30%	28%	19%	29%	33%	23%	
Communities and Local Government	78%	76%	70%	71%	70%	71%	62%	72%	61%	
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	43%	32%	45%	43%	42%	42%	46%	38%	43%	
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	61%	61%	67%	70%	72%	82%	62%	66%	44%	
Department for Education	66%	63%	57%	61%	66%	67%	63%	63%	67%	
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	65%	62%	65%	60%	62%	59%	59%	76%	53%	
Department for International Development	61%	68%	70%	62%	75%	67%	69%	74%	74%	
Department for Transport #	70%	77%	76%	77%	77%	69%	75%	74%	75%	
Department for Work and Pensions #	63%	61%	64%	66%	65%	65%	69%	68%	76%	
Department of Energy and Climate Change	45%	59%	39%	55%	36%	40%	33%	41%	42%	
Department of Health	63%	69%	69%	76%	30%	42%	46%	58%	57%	
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	70%	*	*	68%	*	*	*	56%	
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	28%	21%	34%	32%	26%	20%	34%	32%	23%	
Government Equalities Office †	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0%	*	
HM Treasury #	54%	45%	45%	42%	37%	36%	26%	46%	44%	
Home Office #	51%	51%	51%	49%	49%	44%	47%	47%	37%	
Ministry of Defence #	57%	60%	60%	59%	65%	66%	65%	60%	62%	
Ministry of Justice #	27%	26%	31%	37%	37%	40%	38%	39%	38%	
Northern Ireland Office	*	71%	61%	77%	52%	50%	60%	59%	48%	
Scotland Office	*	68%	62%	85%	77%	78%	*	72%	70%	
Wales Office	38%	52%	*	*	*	*	42%	*	96%	

TABLE A6 continued

Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 January 2011<sup>1</sup>

Government body	Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests that were granted in full								
	2011				2012				2013
	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
<b>Other bodies included in monitoring</b>									
Central Office of Information †	*	*	*	*	*	-	-	-	-
Charity Commission	66%	67%	68%	64%	71%	61%	49%	49%	53%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission †	72%	71%	65%	78%	77%	72%	-	-	-
Crown Prosecution Service	52%	48%	45%	40%	44%	55%	46%	43%	46%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	63%	*	57%	*	48%	50%	55%	48%	38%
Health and Safety Executive	53%	52%	53%	52%	56%	52%	49%	50%	48%
HM Land Registry	76%	84%	92%	87%	92%	97%	96%	95%	86%
HM Revenue and Customs	48%	41%	45%	41%	40%	45%	35%	36%	38%
National Archives	62%	57%	57%	60%	61%	54%	57%	68%	63%
National Savings and Investments	76%	73%	91%	87%	70%	91%	*	*	86%
Office for National Statistics	72%	78%	80%	74%	72%	97%	83%	94%	92%
Office for Standards in Education	63%	51%	43%	43%	46%	42%	37%	40%	32%
Office of Fair Trading	14%	19%	20%	20%	25%	27%	29%	28%	32%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	43%	48%	*	57%	61%	51%	59%	79%	68%
Office of Rail Regulation	61%	80%	76%	16%	54%	59%	50%	*	50%
Ordnance Survey	*	*	79%	*	*	*	*	*	*
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	58%	70%	63%	60%	73%	78%	75%	56%	74%
Serious Fraud Office	*	*	*	*	*	66%	*	50%	57%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	35%	57%	68%	64%	46%	33%	43%	34%	32%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	*	*	*	*	12%	*	*	59%	73%

Note

1 - 'Resolvable requests' are all those where it would have been possible to provide a substantive response. They exclude requests which are 'lapsed' or 'on-hold', where the information was not held, and where it was necessary to provide advice and assistance to the requester, since in each of these cases it would not have been possible to resolve the request in the form it was asked.

TABLE A7

Exemptions and exceptions<sup>1</sup> applied by monitored bodies when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 January - 31 March 2013

Exemption / Exception <sup>1</sup>	Number of requests where exemption used		
	Departments of State only	Other monitored bodies	TOTAL
<b>Total number of requests where one or more exemptions or exceptions were applied</b>	<b>1,486</b>	<b>1,212</b>	<b>2,698</b>
<b>Number of requests where each exemption (listed in Part II of FoI Act<sup>2</sup>) was applied</b>			
S(22) - Information intended for future publication	207	34	241
S(23) - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters	62	5	67
S(24) - National security	53	3	56
S(26) - Defence	17	3	20
S(27) - International relations	77	5	82
S(28) - Relations within the United Kingdom	4	0	4
S(29) - The economy	7	0	7
S(30) - Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities	6	220	226
S(31) - Law enforcement	90	121	211
S(32) - Court records, etc	55	7	62
S(33) - Audit functions	0	0	0
S(34) - Parliamentary privilege	3	0	3
S(35) - Formulation of Government policy, etc	191	3	194
S(36) - Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs	72	4	76
S(37) - Communications with Her Majesty, etc and honours	17	4	21
S(38) - Health and Safety	24	22	46
S(39) - Environmental information	- <sup>3</sup>	- <sup>3</sup>	- <sup>3</sup>
S(40) - Personal information	653	598	1,251
S(41) - Information provided in confidence	55	83	138
S(42) - Legal professional privilege	52	14	66
S(43) - Commercial interests	178	60	238
S(44) - Prohibitions on disclosure	36	172	208
<b>Number of requests where each exception (listed in Part 3 of EIRs) was applied</b>			
3(a) - Exempt personal data	25	29	54
4(b) - Manifestly unreasonable	17	0	17
4(c) - Too general	7	0	7
4(d) - Work in progress / incomplete data	9	1	10
4(e) - Internal communications	22	1	23
5(a) - Adverse effect on international relations, defence, national security, public safety	7	6	13
5(b) - Adverse effect on course of justice or conduct of enquiries	0	2	2
5(c) - Adverse effect on intellectual property rights	1	0	1
5(d) - Impinges on confidentiality of a public authority's work	1	0	1
5(e) - Impinges on confidentiality of commercial or industrial information	11	8	19
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
Environmental Exceptions	<b>103</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>150</b>

#### Notes

1 - 'Exemptions' refers to the provisions in Part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act (and the similar 'exceptions' in Part 3 of the Environmental Information Regulations) which classify certain types of information as exempt from the release obligations. More than one exemption or exception can apply to a single information request.

2 - The exemption described in section 21 of the Act ('Information accessible ... by other means') is not listed here, because requests falling under this exemption do not meet the formal definition of a 'non-routine' request and therefore are not counted in these monitoring statistics.

3 - The exemption listed at section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act ('Environmental Information') effectively states that information requests which fall within the scope of the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) should be handled as these Regulations specify. Requests for environmental information which are refused should apply one of the EIR exceptions listed above.



## Annex B: 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 (FOI) states that (subject to certain conditions):

*‘Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—*

*(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and*

*(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him’*

Regulation 5 of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 states that (subject to certain conditions):

*‘A public authority that holds environmental information shall make it available on request.’*

Following their introduction on 1 January 2005, the above provisions apply to all relevant requests for information made to public authorities, no matter how routine and straightforward they may be.

Government departments supply large amounts of information, both on request and proactively, as an established and routine part of their business. This includes information released in the form of leaflets, correspondence exchanges, reports and other published material, and through websites and departmental FOI Publication Schemes. All information released on request is covered by the Freedom of Information Act. However, it would be both uninformative and fundamentally unfeasible to count all such activity in departmental Freedom of Information monitoring returns.

The statistics in this bulletin therefore relate only to **the ‘non-routine’ information requests** that government departments have received. Essentially, this means that departments’ statistics should only count those requests where:

1. it was necessary to take a considered view on how to handle the request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, and
2. departmental Freedom of Information officer(s) were informed of the request and logged it in their case management systems.

## Defining a request

The full definition of an 'information request' for the purposes of inclusion in the Ministry of Justice's monitoring returns is shown below. This definition was circulated to members of the central government 'Freedom of Information Practitioners' Group' in November 2004.

*'[An information request for monitoring purposes is one ...]*

1. *Which meets the criteria in section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act and if the request falls under the Environmental Information Regulations it includes requests made in any form or context, including oral requests; **and***
2. *Which is a request for information that is not already reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means; **and***
  - (i) Which results in the release of one or more documents (in any media) or inclusion of extracts of documents in the information released; **or***
  - (ii) Results in information being withheld under an exemption or exception from the right of access (either the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations); **or***
  - (iii) The request is not processed because the department estimates the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit in accordance with section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act; **or***
  - (iv) The request is not processed because the department is relying on the provisions of section 14 of the Freedom of Information Act; **or***
  - (v) Where a search is made for information sought in the request and it is found that none is held.'*

## Consistency of the statistics

It is necessary to apply a definition of this sort in order to set a clear boundary to the coverage of our monitoring, and thereby obtain meaningful information from the process. The definition shown above has been widely disseminated to Freedom of Information officers in government and we have tried to ensure that it is applied consistently across all monitored bodies.

However, there is considerable variation in the way these bodies are structured and managed, and in the mechanisms that they have put in place to meet their obligations under the Freedom of Information Act. For example, some bodies operate a centralised Freedom of Information secretariat that co-ordinates responses to all information requests received. Others give a greater degree of autonomy to individual work areas in the 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 body included in the figures.

## Annex C: Government bodies included in these statistics

The statistics in this bulletin have been derived from monitoring returns completed by Freedom of Information officers in government departments during April and May 2013. This is the latest set of quarterly Freedom of Information statistics to be published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the government department which now has lead responsibility for the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The first eight bulletins in this series were published by the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

The formal monitoring work covers a total of 41 government bodies, including all major departments of state (i.e. ministerial departments).

The monitored bodies which are not departments of state nonetheless have significant policymaking, regulatory or information-handling functions. As far as possible while maintaining consistency, this list includes major non-Ministerial Government Departments (NMGDs) and excludes Executive Agencies, although these classifications are not mutually exclusive and periodic 'Machinery of Government' changes make it difficult to define the list precisely.

### **Coverage within the UK**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Office and the Wales Office are included in these statistics. However, we have not collected formal monitoring data from the National Assembly for Wales, or from the bodies that make up the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies in Scotland. This legislation lies outside the scope of the monitoring work on which this bulletin is based. However, the Scotland Office has been included here because, although it deals with matters relating to Scotland, it is based in England and hence falls under the scope of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 rather than the corresponding Scottish legislation.

The following is a full list of the bodies covered by the monitoring statistics in the first quarter of 2013.

### **Departments of State**

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

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

### **Other monitored bodies**

Charity Commission  
Crown Prosecution Service  
Debt Management Office  
Food Standards Agency  
Health and Safety Executive  
HM Land Registry  
HM Revenue and Customs  
National Archives  
National Savings and Investments  
Office for National Statistics  
Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)  
Office of Fair Trading  
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)  
Office of Rail Regulation  
Ordnance Survey  
Royal Mint  
Rural Payments Agency  
Serious Fraud Office  
Treasury Solicitor's Department  
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)

### **Notes**

1. The following departmental changes occurred between the beginning of January 2011 and the end of March 2013, the period covered by the tables 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.

The **Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission** (CMEC) was abolished in July 2012 and its functions have been transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions. From Q3 2012 onwards requests received previously by CMEC have been included within the Department for Work and Pensions' statistics.

2. The figures provided by a number of Departments of State 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 agencies:

- Met Office

#### Department for Education

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

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

#### Department for Transport

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

- Driving Standards Agency
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- Government Cars Despatch Agency
- Highways Agency
- Marine and Coastguard Agency

Vehicle Certification Agency  
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency

#### Department for Work and Pensions

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

Appeals Agency  
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission  
Disability and Carers' Service  
Jobcentre plus  
Pension Service  
Rent Service

#### HM Treasury

Figures include requests received by the Office for Budget Responsibility.

#### Home Office

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

Criminal Records Bureau  
Borders and Immigration Agency  
Identity and Passport  
National Fraud Authority (from 1 April 2011)  
Government Equalities Office

#### Ministry of Defence

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

Defence Support Group (DSG),  
Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL)  
UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO)

#### Ministry of Justice

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

## Annex D: Explanatory notes

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

The statistics in this bulletin relate to the handling by central government bodies of information requests received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs). They are collected and published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), with assistance from Freedom of Information officers across central government.

The FOI Act received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000. Under the Act, anybody may request information from a public authority which has functions in England, Wales and/or Northern Ireland. The Act confers two statutory rights on applicants:

- To be told whether or not the public authority holds that information; and if so,
- To have that information communicated to them.

These statutory rights came into force on 1 January 2005. The MoJ is the lead department responsible for the FOI Act. Further information is available at:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/information-access-rights/foi-guidance-for-practitioners>



The (amended) EIRs also came into force on 1 January 2005, to coincide with the FOI Act. They clarify and extend previous rights to environmental information held by public authorities. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is the lead department responsible for the EIRs. Further information is available from their website at:

<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/corporate/policy/opengov/eir/>

These statistics are derived from monitoring returns submitted to MoJ in April and May 2013. They relate to information requests received during the period 1 January to 31 March 2013. Thanks are due to FOI officers for their work in preparing these returns. The collection of monitoring data began on the 21st working day after the last day of this period (i.e. on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2013), since 20 working days is the statutory deadline for public authorities to respond to information requests under both the FOI Act and the EIRs.

Only 'non-routine' information requests are counted in these statistics. Important notes on the scope and consistency of these statistics are given in Annex B.

These statistics cover a total of 41 central government bodies. At the commencement of the Act in January 2005 there were 43 bodies covered by the monitoring statistics, but the precise number can change from time to time due to 'Machinery of Government' changes. A full list of the monitored bodies in Q1 2013 is shown in Annex C.

## Contacts

Press enquires on the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act in a particular government body should be addressed to that body's Press Office.

Press enquiries on the contents of this bulletin should be directed to the Ministry of Justice press office:

Paul Halford  
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Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

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Justice Statistics Analytical Services  
Ministry of Justice  
7th Floor  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ  
Tel: 020 3334 5324  
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](mailto:statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

General information about the official statistics system of the UK is available from [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

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