

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Statistics on implementation in central government Q3: July - September 2010

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

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Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“Fol Act”) and the associated Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (“EIRs”) came fully into force on 1 January 2005. This bulletin covers the period July to September 2010 and presents the latest quarterly set of statistics on their implementation within central government.

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

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/freedomofinformationquarterly.htm>

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090608181153/http://www.foi.gov.uk/reference/statisticsAndReports.htm>

The statistics in this bulletin relate to the handling of written requests for information received by monitored bodies during the relevant time period. **They cover only “non-routine” information requests**, and information given out on request as a part of routine business should not be counted. **Appendix A** gives a definition of a “non-routine” request, and other information on the scope of these statistics.

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

The statistics are designed to allow the monitored bodies to compare and monitor their performance in handling Freedom of Information requests, to inform the development 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 Q3 2008, the period covered by the tables in this bulletin.

Executive summary

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

Across all the monitored bodies covered in these statistics, a total of 11,339 “non-routine” information requests were received during the third quarter (July to September) of 2010 (Q3) – an increase of 7 per cent on the third quarter of 2009. Although there has been considerable quarter-on-quarter variation, there has been a generally increasing trend in the number of requests received by the monitored bodies over the past two years. Some 95 per cent of the requests received had been processed at the time of monitoring.

Departments of State reported receiving 7,200 “non-routine” information requests during Q3, an increase of 16 per cent on the corresponding quarter of the previous year. Other monitored bodies received 4,139 requests – a decrease of 6 per cent compared to the third quarter of 2009.

Of this total of 11,339 requests, 351 were handled under the amended Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) which came into force on 1 January 2005.

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

During Q3 of 2010, 92 per cent of all monitored bodies’ requests (excluding those “on hold” or lapsed) were “in time”, in that they were processed within the statutory deadline¹ or were subject to a permitted deadline extension. This continues an increasing trend seen over the past year.

As in previous quarters, there was some variation in timeliness between monitored bodies in Q3 of 2010. For Departments of State, the percentage of requests which were processed “in time” ranged from 66 per cent (for the Ministry of Defence) to 100 per cent (Attorney General's Office, Department of Health, Northern Ireland Office and Scotland Office)².

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

Of all “resolvable” requests received during Q3 of 2010 (i.e. requests where it was possible to make a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought), 56 per cent were granted in full. The proportion of requests granted in full has generally followed a flat trend over the last two years.

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

² 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.

As in previous quarters, there was some variation in the proportions of requests granted in full between monitored bodies in Q3 of 2010. For Departments of State this ranged from 26 per cent (for the Cabinet Office) to 93 per cent (Government Equalities Office)². However, caution should be taken in reading too much into these differences as it at least in part reflects the nature of requests received by each monitored body. For example, Ministry of Justice receives a large number of requests which relate to individual court cases which are exempt under the Act and therefore withheld in full.

Commentary

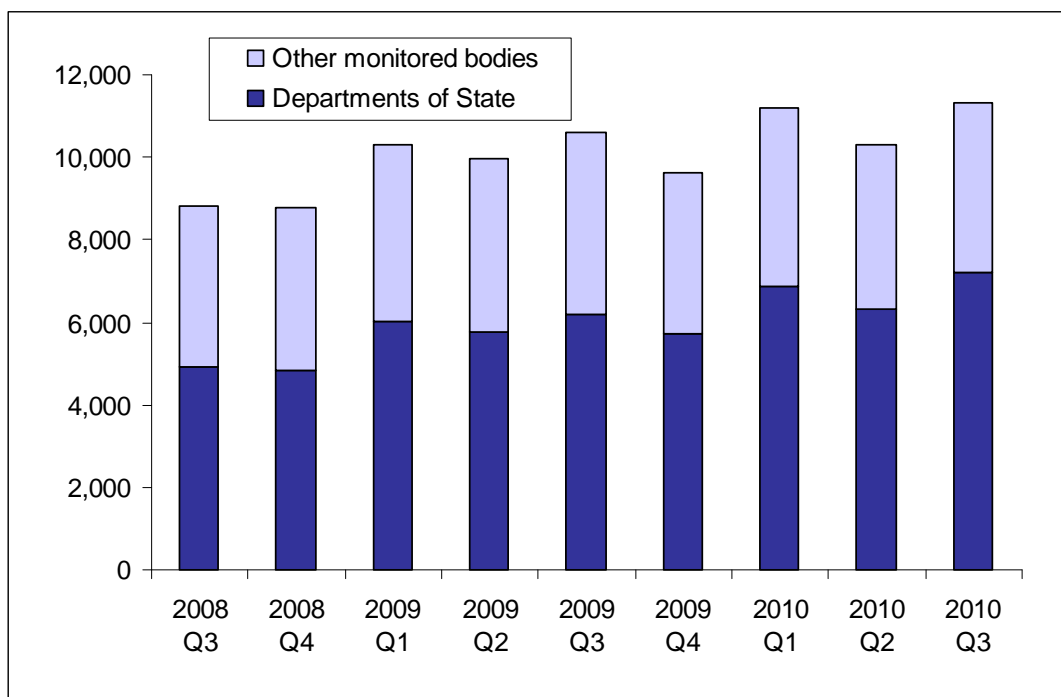
Number of requests [see Table 1 and Table A]

Departments of State reported receiving a total of 7,200 information requests under the Freedom of Information Act and the associated Environmental Information Regulations during the quarter from 1 July to 30 September 2010 (Q3). Other monitored bodies reported having received 4,139 requests. Across all monitored bodies, therefore, a total of 11,339 requests were reported. This constitutes the highest quarterly total number of requests received by monitored bodies since the very first quarter of the Act's implementation in Q1 2005.

This overall total for Q3 of 2010 is 7 per cent greater than in the corresponding quarter last year (i.e. Q3 of 2009), and 10 per cent more than in the preceding quarter. Although there has been considerable quarter-on-quarter variation, there has been a generally increasing trend in the number of requests received by the monitored bodies over the past two years

The number of requests received by Departments of State was 16 per cent more than during the same period last year, while the total received by other monitored bodies decreased by 6 per cent. Departments of State accounted for 63 per cent of all requests received by monitored bodies in Q3 of 2010. Although the Government Equalities Office was added to the list of monitored bodies from Q1 2010 onwards, the relatively small number of requests it receives each quarter means comparisons with requests volumes in earlier quarters are still possible.

Figure 1: Numbers of FoI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies, quarterly from Q3 2008



Of the Departments of State, the Ministry of Justice reported having received 854 requests during Q3, the highest departmental total. The other departments that received more than 700 requests were:

- Home Office - 781
- Department for Work and Pensions - 777
- Department for Transport - 735
- Ministry of Defence - 718

Among other monitored bodies, the Health and Safety Executive reported having received 1,586 requests during Q3, while the National Archives received 817. 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. Both these monitored bodies account for almost 60 per cent of all requests received by all the other monitoring bodies. Therefore the trends for the other monitored bodies group as a whole are heavily dependant on the trends for these two particular bodies.

Monitoring statistics also show the number of non-routine information requests that fell fully or mostly under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs). There were 351 such requests during the third quarter of 2010, accounting for 3.1 per cent of all requests received.

Of the monitored bodies with requests falling under the EIRs, the Rural Payments Agency and Health and Safety Executive, with more than 70 requests each, had the highest totals.

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

A large majority of requests (95 per cent) received during Q3 had been processed by the time monitoring information was collected. Of the 575 requests that were still being processed by the monitored bodies, 67 (12 per cent) were reported as “on hold” or “lapsed” because a fee had been charged but no payment had been received. These requests are effectively in suspension, since public authorities are not obliged to respond until the fee has been paid.

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

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

Across all monitored bodies:

- 88 per cent of requests received during Q3 of 2010 were sent a response within this standard deadline - up from 86 per cent in Q2 2010.
- 92 per cent of the requests received during Q3 were “in time”, in that they either received a response within the standard deadline or were

subject to a permitted deadline extension. This is an increase on the 90 per cent from Q2 2010, and continues an increasing trend seen over the past year.

Although the standard statutory deadline for response to a FoI request is 20 working days, a 30 working day deadline applies where requests relate wholly or partly to information transferred to the National Archives, which has provided response timeliness information on this basis.

Figure 2: Timeliness of responses to FoI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies in Q3 2010

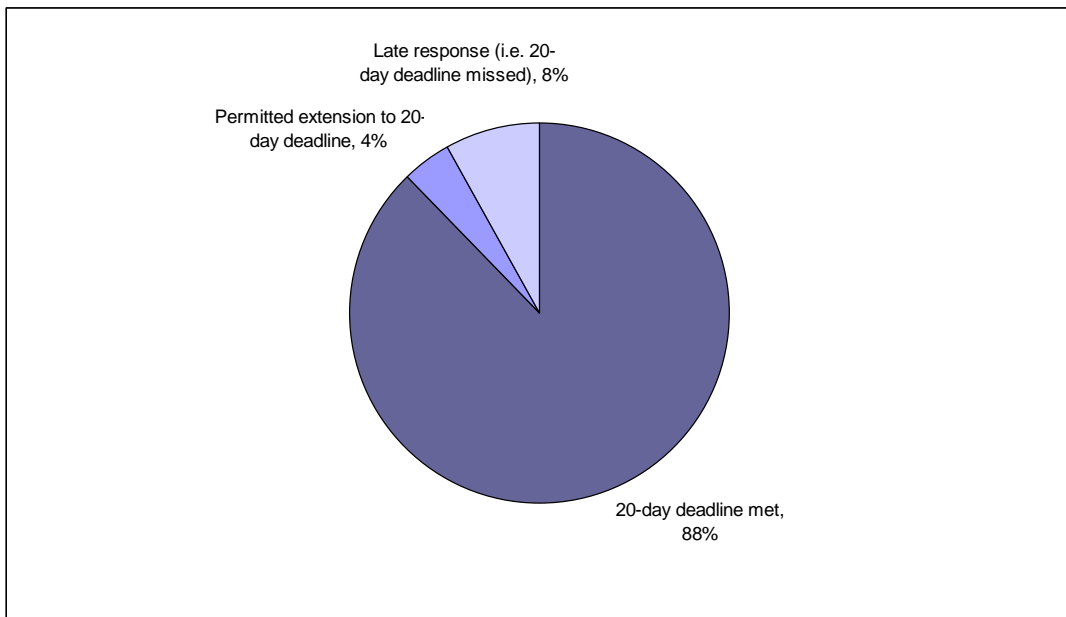
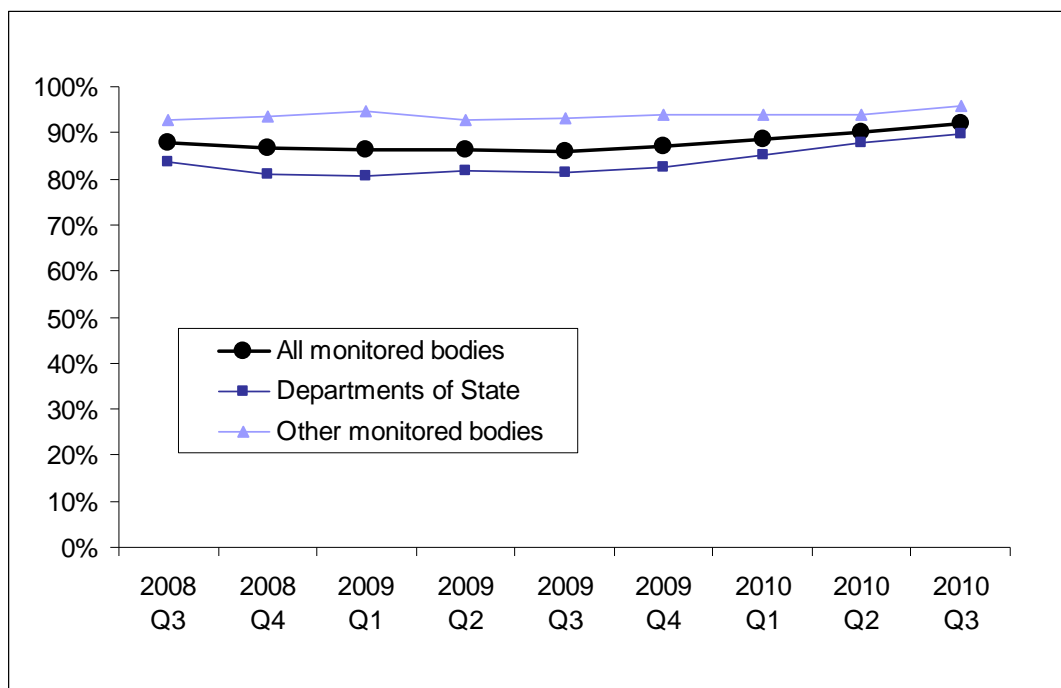


Figure 3: Percentage of FoI requests processed “in time” by Departments of State and other monitored bodies, quarterly from Q3 2008



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

Of the 11,339 requests reported during Q3 of 2010 across all monitored bodies,

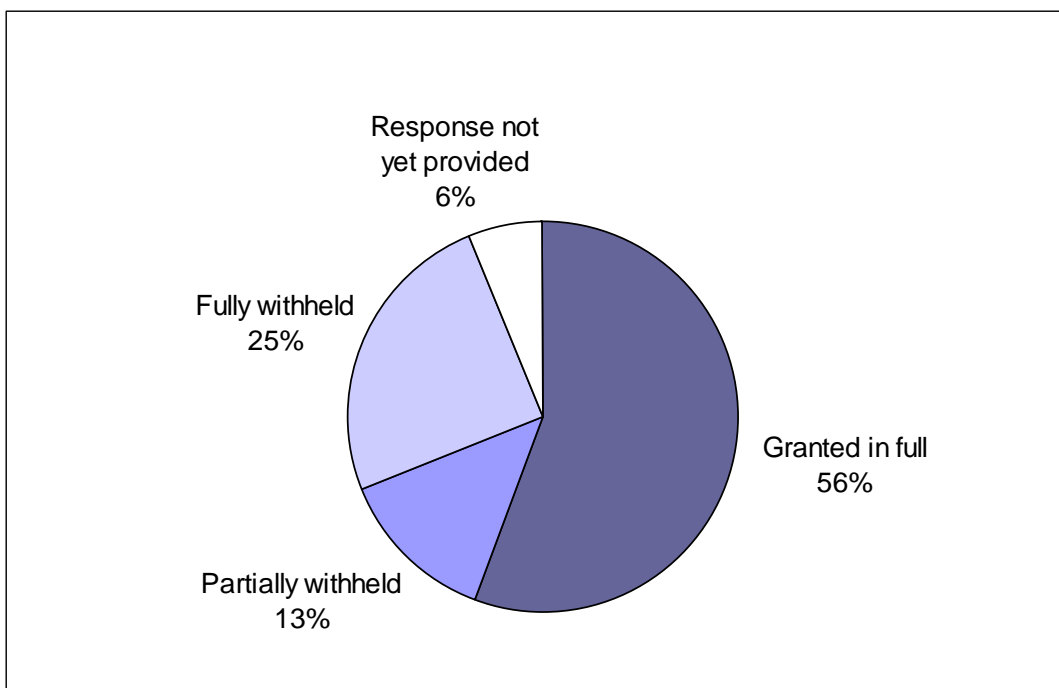
- 67 were “on hold” awaiting a fee payment;
- 2,003 requests sought information that was not held;
- 776 were responded to with “advice and assistance” because the body handling the request needed further information in order to identify the information being sought.

As a result, the remaining 8,493 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 Q3 of 2010,

- 56 per cent were granted in full, down from 58 per cent in Q2 2010; the proportion of requests granted in full has generally followed a flat trend over the last two years;
- 13 per cent were withheld in part;
- 25 per cent were withheld in full;
- 6 per cent had not yet received a substantive response at the time of monitoring.

Figure 4: Initial outcomes of “resolvable” FoI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies in Q3 2010



Use of exemptions and exceptions [see Table 4]

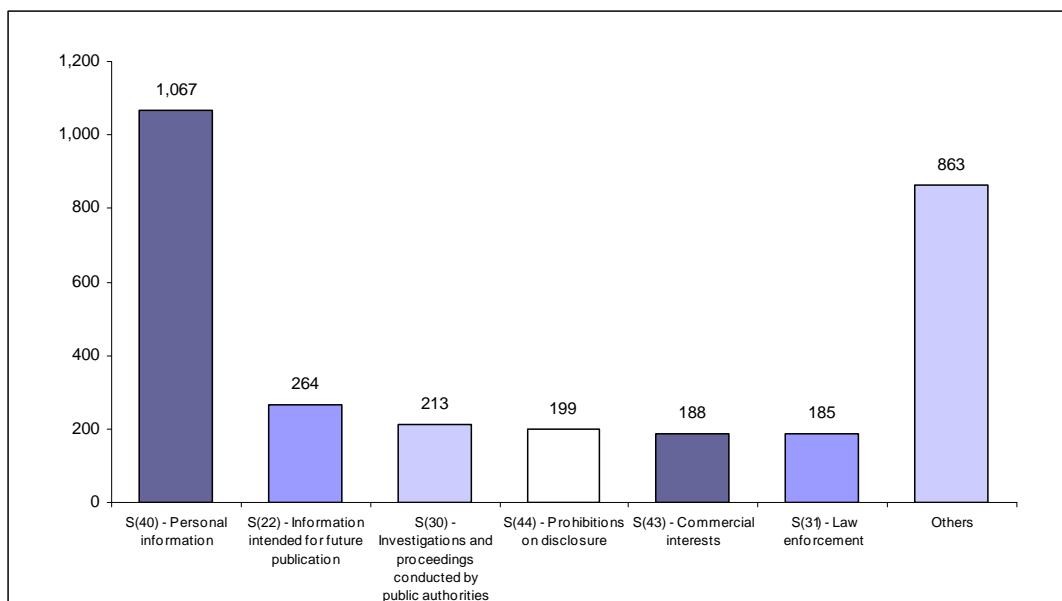
Under the FoI Act, a public authority can only refuse to provide requested information that it holds if:

- The request is considered vexatious or repeated
- The cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit
- The information falls in one or more of the categories of exempt information (“exemptions”) listed in Part II of the Act.

There are similar arrangements that apply to certain types of information under the EIRs. These list a number of “exceptions to the duty to disclose environmental information” in Part 3 of the Regulations.

Across all monitored bodies, a total of 2,555 requests were reported as having one or more of these exemptions or exceptions applied to them during Q3.

Figure 5: Number of exemptions and exceptions applied by Departments of State and other monitored bodies on requests received in Q3 2010



The most commonly applied exemptions or exceptions in Q3 2010 were:

- Section 40 of the FoI Act (relating to personal information), which was applied to 1,067 requests,
- Section 22 (information intended for future publication), which was applied to 264 requests,
- and Section 30 (investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities), which was applied to 213 requests,

Tables

Latest quarterly tables

- Table 1. Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2010, and their status at time of monitoring
- Table 2. Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2010
- Table 3. Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2010
- Table 4. Exemptions and exceptions applied by monitored bodies when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2010

In-year performance and volume tables

- Table A. Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 July 2008
- Table B. Proportion of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were answered "in time", by quarter, since 1 July 2008
- Table C. Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 July 2008

TABLE 1**Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2010, 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	11,339	10,764	67	508	351
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,200	6,787	0	413	203
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,139	3,977	67	95	148
<i>Departments of State</i>					
Attorney General's Office	37	35	0	2	0
Cabinet Office	307	274	0	33	0
Communities and Local Government	237	225	0	12	44
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	244	226	0	18	4
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	165	159	0	6	27
Department for Education	263	242	0	21	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	142	137	0	5	44
Department for International Development	120	116	0	4	0
Department for Transport #	735	704	0	31	43
Department for Work and Pensions #	777	765	0	12	0
Department of Energy and Climate Change	144	142	0	2	33
Department of Health	522	522	0	0	0
Export Credits Guarantee Department	20	19	0	1	0
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	310	283	0	27	2
Government Equalities Office	29	29	0	0	0
HM Treasury #	666	652	0	14	3
Home Office #	781	755	0	26	0
Ministry of Defence #	718	540	0	178	0
Ministry of Justice #	854	836	0	18	1
Northern Ireland Office	56	55	0	1	1
Scotland Office	34	32	0	2	0
Wales Office	39	39	0	0	1

TABLE 1 continued

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2010, 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				
Central Office of Information	16	16	0	0
Charity Commission	241	241	0	1
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	44	44	0	0
Crown Prosecution Service	124	123	0	1
Debt Management Office	15	15	0	0
Food Standards Agency	47	44	0	3
Health and Safety Executive	1,586	1,561	0	25
HM Land Registry	49	49	0	0
HM Revenue and Customs	403	396	0	7
National Archives	817	692	67	58
National Savings and Investments	27	27	0	0
Office for National Statistics	30	30	0	0
Office for Standards in Education	246	246	0	0
Office of Fair Trading	157	157	0	0
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	38	38	0	0
Office of Rail Regulation	33	33	0	0
Ordnance Survey	17	17	0	0
Royal Mint	3	3	0	0
Rural Payments Agency	83	82	0	1
Serious Fraud Office	33	33	0	0
Treasury Solicitor's Department	100	100	0	0
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	30	30	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 November 2010

2 - Requests "on hold" are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received at the time of monitoring. These requests are effectively suspended since public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made.

Where a fee is charged and the deadline for payment expires, the request is deemed to have "lapsed" as no further action is required from the public authority.

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

TABLE 2

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2010

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	11,272	9,885	479	908	88%	92%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,200	6,123	341	736	85%	90%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,072	3,762	138	172	92%	96%
Departments of State						
Attorney General's Office	37	35	2	0	95%	100%
Cabinet Office	307	214	46	47	70%	85%
Communities and Local Government	237	208	22	7	88%	97%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	244	201	33	10	82%	96%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	165	140	23	2	85%	99%
Department for Education	263	176	5	82	67%	69%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	142	128	6	8	90%	94%
Department for International Development	120	108	10	2	90%	98%
Department for Transport #	735	654	22	59	89%	92%
Department for Work and Pensions #	777	731	13	33	94%	96%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	144	120	11	13	83%	91%
Department of Health	522	519	3	0	99%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	20	18	0	2	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	310	244	34	32	79%	90%
Government Equalities Office	29	28	0	1	97%	97%
HM Treasury #	666	640	22	4	96%	99%
Home Office #	781	628	60	93	80%	88%
Ministry of Defence #	718	460	13	245	64%	66%
Ministry of Justice #	854	750	11	93	88%	89%
Northern Ireland Office	56	54	2	0	96%	100%
Scotland Office	34	32	2	0	94%	100%
Wales Office	39	35	1	3	90%	92%

TABLE 2 continued

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2010

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Timeliness of response			Percentage of requests meeting 20-day deadline	Percentage of requests "in time" (i.e. meeting deadline or with permitted extension)
		20-day deadline met	Permitted extension ² to 20-day deadline	Late response (i.e. 20-day deadline missed)		
Other bodies included in monitoring						
Central Office of Information	16	16	0	0	*	*
Charity Commission	241	236	0	5	98%	98%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	44	44	0	0	100%	100%
Crown Prosecution Service	124	117	1	6	94%	95%
Debt Management Office	15	15	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	47	39	5	3	83%	94%
Health and Safety Executive	1,586	1,466	16	104	92%	93%
HM Land Registry	49	49	0	0	100%	100%
HM Revenue and Customs	403	367	1	35	91%	91%
National Archives ^	750	645	98	7	86%	99%
National Savings and Investments	27	27	0	0	100%	100%
Office for National Statistics	30	30	0	0	100%	100%
Office for Standards in Education	246	244	2	0	99%	100%
Office of Fair Trading	157	153	0	4	97%	97%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	38	31	3	4	82%	89%
Office of Rail Regulation	33	31	1	1	94%	97%
Ordnance Survey	17	17	0	0	*	*
Royal Mint	3	3	0	0	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	83	71	10	2	86%	98%
Serious Fraud Office	33	32	1	0	97%	100%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	100	100	0	0	100%	100%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	30	29	0	1	97%	97%

Notes

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

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

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

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

2 - "Permitted extensions" include:

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

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

TABLE 3
Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2010

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	11,272	776	2,003	8,493	4,729	1,126	2,130	508	56%	25%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,200	516	1,197	5,487	3,133	641	1,300	413	57%	24%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	4,072	260	806	3,006	1,596	485	830	95	53%	28%
Departments of State										
Attorney General's Office	37	0	22	15	9	0	4	2	*	*
Cabinet Office	307	36	71	200	51	33	83	33	26%	42%
Communities and Local Government	237	0	17	220	161	29	18	12	73%	8%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	244	19	58	167	90	35	24	18	54%	14%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	165	10	19	136	76	36	18	6	56%	13%
Department for Education	263	17	21	225	154	19	31	21	68%	14%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	142	6	25	111	78	16	12	5	70%	11%
Department for International Development	120	0	7	113	77	8	24	4	68%	21%
Department for Transport #	735	6	167	562	403	50	78	31	72%	14%
Department for Work and Pensions #	777	15	43	719	450	68	189	12	63%	26%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	144	8	36	100	48	24	26	2	48%	26%
Department of Health	522	11	107	404	293	34	77	0	73%	19%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	20	0	0	20	16	2	1	1	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	310	25	45	240	67	71	75	27	28%	31%
Government Equalities Office	29	0	0	29	27	2	0	0	93%	0%
HM Treasury #	666	81	153	432	260	28	130	14	60%	30%
Home Office #	781	132	153	496	255	92	123	26	51%	25%
Ministry of Defence #	718	6	85	627	365	31	53	178	58%	8%
Ministry of Justice #	854	138	140	576	190	59	309	18	33%	54%
Northern Ireland Office	56	0	9	47	32	3	11	1	68%	23%
Scotland Office	34	3	5	26	15	0	9	2	58%	35%
Wales Office	39	3	14	22	16	1	5	0	73%	23%

TABLE 3 continued
Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2010

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Requests where advice and assistance ² provided	Requests where information not held	Total "resolvable" requests ³	Initial outcome of request				Percentage of resolvable requests granted in full	Percentage of resolvable requests withheld in full
					Granted in full	Partially withheld	Fully withheld ⁴	Response not yet provided ⁵		
Other bodies included in monitoring										
Central Office of Information	16	0	2	14	14	0	0	0	*	*
Charity Commission	241	11	40	190	122	35	33	0	64%	17%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	44	1	1	42	24	1	17	0	57%	40%
Crown Prosecution Service	124	14	30	80	41	6	32	1	51%	40%
Debt Management Office	15	0	4	11	11	0	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	47	0	6	41	13	15	10	3	32%	24%
Health and Safety Executive	1,586	57	512	1,017	533	212	247	25	52%	24%
HM Land Registry	49	3	1	45	41	1	3	0	91%	7%
HM Revenue and Customs	403	9	44	350	166	26	151	7	47%	43%
National Archives	750	100	83	567	274	67	168	58	48%	30%
National Savings and Investments	27	0	1	26	12	0	14	0	46%	54%
Office for National Statistics	30	1	3	26	20	2	4	0	77%	15%
Office for Standards in Education	246	7	23	216	132	46	38	0	61%	18%
Office of Fair Trading	157	23	6	128	33	18	77	0	26%	60%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	38	4	10	24	16	4	4	0	67%	17%
Office of Rail Regulation	33	7	6	20	16	3	1	0	*	*
Ordnance Survey	17	0	5	12	9	3	0	0	*	*
Royal Mint	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	83	6	5	72	56	6	9	1	78%	13%
Serious Fraud Office	33	8	5	20	4	4	12	0	*	*
Treasury Solicitor's Department	100	3	12	85	42	35	8	0	49%	9%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	30	6	7	17	14	1	2	0	*	*

Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TABLE 4

Exemptions and exceptions¹ applied by monitored bodies* when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2010

Exemption / Exception ¹	Number of requests where exemption used		
	Departments of State only	Other monitored bodies	TOTAL
Total number of requests where one or more exemptions or exceptions were applied	1,342	1,213	2,555
Number of requests where each exemption (listed in Part II of FoI Act²) was applied			
S(22) - Information intended for future publication	235	29	264
S(23) - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters	48	28	76
S(24) - National security	27	0	27
S(26) - Defence	12	2	14
S(27) - International relations	64	6	70
S(28) - Relations within the United Kingdom	2	0	2
S(29) - The economy	3	0	3
S(30) - Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities	43	170	213
S(31) - Law enforcement	74	111	185
S(32) - Court records, etc	66	10	76
S(33) - Audit functions	1	4	5
S(34) - Parliamentary privilege	0	0	0
S(35) - Formulation of Government policy, etc	209	4	213
S(36) - Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs	36	6	42
S(37) - Communications with Her Majesty, etc and honours	6	1	7
S(38) - Health and Safety	20	26	46
S(39) - Environmental information	₃	₃	₃
S(40) - Personal information	457	610	1,067
S(41) - Information provided in confidence	53	82	135
S(42) - Legal professional privilege	42	11	53
S(43) - Commercial interests	145	43	188
S(44) - Prohibitions on disclosure	15	184	199
Number of requests where each exception (listed in Part 3 of EIRs) was applied			
3(a) - Exempt personal data	16	4	20
4(b) - Manifestly unreasonable	8	3	11
4(c) - Too general	2	0	2
4(d) - Work in progress / incomplete data	12	2	14
4(e) - Internal communications	21	1	22
5(a) - Adverse effect on international relations, defence, national security, public safety	8	0	8
5(b) - Adverse effect on course of justice or conduct of enquiries	4	0	4
5(c) - Adverse effect on intellectual property rights	0	1	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	4	4	8
5(f) - Adverse effect on interests of person who provided the information	3	0	3
5(g) - Adverse effect on protection of environment to which information relates	0	0	0

Notes

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

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

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

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

TABLE A
Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 July 2008

Government body	2008		2009				2010		
	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	8,825	8,764	10,294	9,964	10,597	9,612	11,199	10,286	11,339
TOTAL for Departments of State only	4,938	4,818	6,019	5,769	6,208	5,736	6,857	6,339	7,200
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,887	3,946	4,275	4,195	4,389	3,876	4,342	3,947	4,139
<i>Departments of State</i>									
Attorney General's Office	24	23	19	28	27	28	28	33	37
Cabinet Office	237	228	274	253	261	193	236	235	307
Communities and Local Government	183	174	204	200	237	198	243	218	237
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills ¹	223	195	216	269	244	182	279	231	244
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	119	110	176	142	164	122	165	119	165
Department for Education ²	141	112	217	213	251	173	180	220	263
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	121	108	131	145	159	142	143	127	142
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	71	59	74	-	-	-	-	-	-
Department for International Development	60	71	80	70	88	91	92	104	120
Department for Transport #	485	423	586	560	707	629	794	605	735
Department for Work and Pensions #	367	436	533	596	617	600	797	748	777
Department of Energy and Climate Change	-	45	55	54	88	89	171	138	144
Department of Health	345	332	423	485	503	486	510	465	522
Export Credits Guarantee Department	13	20	9	17	12	11	23	10	20
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	275	210	281	231	321	304	311	250	310
Government Equalities Office	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	15	29
HM Treasury #	324	350	446	399	315	291	438	523	666
Home Office #	509	508	643	638	577	637	763	699	781
Ministry of Defence #	685	654	758	670	766	724	738	693	718
Ministry of Justice #	676	670	757	679	732	731	808	805	854
Northern Ireland Office	45	41	65	49	82	59	66	42	56
Scotland Office	23	31	58	52	39	30	30	28	34
Wales Office	12	18	14	19	18	16	12	31	39

TABLE A continued

Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 July 2008

Government body	2008		2009				2010		
	Q3:	Q4:	Q1:	Q2:	Q3:	Q4:	Q1:	Q2:	Q3:
	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information	9	10	20	8	14	8	13	12	16
Charity Commission	128	142	142	133	149	133	202	185	241
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	-	-	33	41	59	62	55	47	44
Crown Prosecution Service	116	111	125	139	119	136	135	103	124
Debt Management Office ³	98	92	4	6	6	4	10	9	15
Food Standards Agency	20	29	28	29	36	36	57	29	47
Health and Safety Executive	1,559	1,574	1,711	1,669	1,589	1,523	1,562	1,656	1,586
HM Land Registry	25	24	33	41	29	47	49	36	49
HM Revenue and Customs	316	316	323	355	409	339	391	369	403
National Archives	1,002	950	1,056	885	1,010	787	927	733	817
National Savings and Investments	14	11	33	36	44	18	23	20	27
Office for National Statistics	30	27	32	29	33	37	62	52	30
Office for Standards in Education	225	332	318	317	292	272	314	273	246
Office of Fair Trading	82	61	79	128	162	139	123	118	157
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	31	28	53	39	42	45	60	36	38
Office of Rail Regulation	50	50	63	52	59	61	67	43	33
Ordnance Survey	53	44	37	60	67	41	42	17	17
Royal Mint	4	4	5	9	11	4	8	5	3
Rural Payments Agency	25	38	73	83	84	75	91	86	83
Serious Fraud Office	10	27	27	32	24	23	33	20	33
Treasury Solicitor's Department	69	61	55	69	106	64	98	79	100
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	21	15	25	35	45	22	20	19	30

Notes

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

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

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

3 - Requests received by the Debt Management Office have been counted on a different basis in the statistics from Q1 2009 onwards compared to earlier periods. Please see Appendix B for more information.

TABLE B

Proportion of non-routine information requests received that were answered "in time", by quarter, since 1 July 2008 (see footnote)

Government body	2008		2009				2010		
	Q3:	Q4:	Q1:	Q2:	Q3:	Q4:	Q1:	Q2:	Q3:
	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	88%	87%	86%	86%	86%	87%	89%	90%	92%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	84%	81%	81%	82%	81%	82%	85%	88%	90%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	93%	93%	95%	93%	93%	94%	94%	94%	96%
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	92%	100%	*	96%	96%	96%	96%	94%	100%
Cabinet Office	96%	95%	96%	95%	91%	86%	90%	88%	85%
Communities and Local Government	93%	92%	94%	95%	95%	95%	94%	96%	97%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills ¹	90%	77%	77%	76%	79%	85%	95%	95%	96%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	95%	97%	100%	99%	98%	98%	98%	100%	99%
Department for Education ²	92%	91%	87%	87%	80%	77%	91%	89%	69%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	84%	99%	91%	85%	85%	88%	93%	87%	94%
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	69%	58%	66%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Department for International Development	93%	99%	96%	97%	98%	93%	96%	97%	98%
Department for Transport #	88%	92%	90%	90%	94%	95%	94%	96%	92%
Department for Work and Pensions #	62%	75%	77%	75%	79%	79%	77%	82%	96%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	-	71%	84%	72%	80%	87%	95%	96%	91%
Department of Health	91%	83%	89%	96%	96%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	*	*	*	*	*	96%	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	99%	94%	96%	97%	96%	93%	94%	98%	90%
Government Equalities Office	-	-	-	-	-	-	77%	*	97%
HM Treasury #	99%	100%	99%	100%	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%
Home Office #	82%	78%	73%	65%	67%	68%	81%	80%	88%
Ministry of Defence #	86%	82%	66%	69%	49%	53%	55%	69%	66%
Ministry of Justice #	63%	51%	60%	71%	77%	81%	81%	84%	89%
Northern Ireland Office	93%	95%	97%	84%	99%	90%	95%	95%	100%
Scotland Office	96%	68%	53%	67%	56%	80%	73%	86%	100%
Wales Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	97%	92%

TABLE B continued

Proportion of non-routine information requests received that were answered "in time", by quarter, since 1 July 2008 (see footnote)

Government body	2008		2009				2010		
	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Charity Commission	98%	95%	99%	89%	91%	95%	93%	96%	98%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	-	-	36%	59%	71%	85%	64%	98%	100%
Crown Prosecution Service	97%	100%	99%	98%	96%	99%	96%	92%	95%
Debt Management Office ³	100%	100%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	*	100%	100%	97%	100%	97%	91%	100%	94%
Health and Safety Executive	91%	91%	94%	93%	92%	92%	93%	93%	93%
HM Land Registry	96%	88%	94%	80%	97%	94%	96%	92%	100%
HM Revenue and Customs	79%	87%	88%	83%	85%	88%	89%	92%	91%
National Archives ^	95%	96%	98%	98%	97%	99%	98%	97%	99%
National Savings and Investments	*	*	94%	100%	100%	*	96%	*	100%
Office for National Statistics	97%	96%	91%	93%	94%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Office for Standards in Education	96%	96%	98%	97%	99%	95%	97%	99%	100%
Office of Fair Trading	100%	98%	96%	95%	96%	94%	98%	92%	97%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	97%	86%	91%	77%	95%	87%	97%	89%	89%
Office of Rail Regulation	100%	98%	97%	92%	100%	98%	94%	88%	97%
Ordnance Survey	83%	93%	95%	98%	97%	98%	100%	*	*
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	92%	84%	97%	88%	90%	92%	75%	85%	98%
Serious Fraud Office	*	100%	85%	63%	38%	96%	88%	*	100%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	99%	100%	98%	100%	99%	97%	99%	99%	100%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	100%	*	56%	74%	100%	77%	*	*	97%

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

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

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

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

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

3 - Requests received by the Debt Management Office have been counted on a different basis in the statistics from Q1 2009 onwards compared to earlier periods. Please see Appendix B for more information.

Notes: A request is "in time" if it was answered within the statutory response deadline, or within a permitted extension to this deadline.

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

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

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

TABLE C

Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 July 2008 (see footnote)

Government body	2008		2009				2010		
	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	57%	57%	56%	55%	55%	55%	54%	58%	56%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	56%	55%	54%	55%	53%	54%	52%	61%	57%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	59%	59%	59%	55%	57%	55%	57%	54%	53%
<i>Departments of State</i>									
Attorney General's Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Cabinet Office	31%	23%	27%	23%	29%	39%	24%	38%	26%
Communities and Local Government	64%	78%	68%	72%	69%	78%	77%	73%	73%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills ¹	39%	25%	31%	40%	46%	47%	51%	50%	54%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	60%	56%	60%	68%	66%	66%	64%	70%	56%
Department for Education ²	63%	72%	69%	60%	70%	75%	72%	82%	68%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	65%	75%	66%	71%	69%	65%	62%	67%	70%
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	62%	75%	65%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Department for International Development	72%	89%	66%	64%	66%	51%	52%	52%	68%
Department for Transport #	69%	73%	76%	65%	70%	73%	74%	71%	72%
Department for Work and Pensions #	68%	77%	67%	64%	64%	63%	55%	72%	63%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	-	39%	36%	48%	50%	46%	46%	53%	48%
Department of Health	73%	65%	68%	69%	75%	76%	70%	70%	73%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	*	*	*	*	*	52%	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	35%	25%	28%	33%	30%	33%	26%	33%	28%
Government Equalities Office	-	-	-	-	-	-	77%	*	93%
HM Treasury #	46%	48%	41%	60%	52%	56%	50%	70%	60%
Home Office #	44%	47%	40%	41%	40%	50%	47%	54%	51%
Ministry of Defence #	67%	59%	59%	61%	44%	45%	46%	65%	58%
Ministry of Justice #	37%	33%	40%	36%	31%	26%	28%	31%	33%
Northern Ireland Office	57%	48%	65%	53%	56%	43%	45%	69%	68%
Scotland Office	*	54%	59%	67%	43%	74%	55%	*	58%
Wales Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	73%

TABLE C continued

Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 July 2008 (see footnote)

Government body	2008		2009				2010		
	Q3:	Q4:	Q1:	Q2:	Q3:	Q4:	Q1:	Q2:	Q3:
	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Charity Commission	51%	60%	65%	56%	66%	64%	66%	64%	64%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	-	-	69%	58%	77%	44%	66%	56%	57%
Crown Prosecution Service	33%	48%	56%	48%	62%	66%	60%	49%	51%
Debt Management Office ³	100%	100%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	*	19%	36%	40%	38%	15%	39%	38%	32%
Health and Safety Executive	54%	55%	51%	55%	52%	50%	53%	53%	52%
HM Land Registry	96%	95%	97%	95%	97%	88%	91%	93%	91%
HM Revenue and Customs	56%	63%	67%	50%	45%	49%	53%	49%	47%
National Archives	67%	64%	71%	60%	63%	59%	56%	48%	48%
National Savings and Investments	*	*	94%	74%	84%	*	64%	*	46%
Office for National Statistics	64%	*	63%	*	70%	60%	77%	74%	77%
Office for Standards in Education	44%	48%	45%	46%	65%	64%	61%	62%	61%
Office of Fair Trading	17%	20%	22%	21%	34%	35%	41%	31%	26%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	*	*	62%	54%	77%	70%	67%	68%	67%
Office of Rail Regulation	68%	69%	78%	87%	74%	78%	82%	59%	*
Ordnance Survey	84%	72%	63%	66%	71%	76%	100%	*	*
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	*	72%	68%	67%	77%	80%	72%	90%	78%
Serious Fraud Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	48%	*	*
Treasury Solicitor's Department	75%	67%	29%	63%	23%	30%	37%	44%	49%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	*	*	73%	68%	80%	*	*	*	*

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

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

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

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

3 - Requests received by the Debt Management Office have been counted on a different basis in the statistics from Q1 2009 onwards compared to earlier periods. Please see Appendix B for more information.

Notes

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

Appendix A – Important note on the scope and consistency of the statistics

Defining the scope of Freedom of Information monitoring

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol) states that (subject to certain conditions):

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

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

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

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

“A public authority that holds environmental information shall make it available on request.”

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

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

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

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

Defining a request

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

“[An information request for monitoring purposes is one ...]

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

Consistency of the statistics

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

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

As a result of these differences, there could be a degree of inconsistency in the way in which bodies have interpreted and applied the definition of an “information request” for monitoring purposes. However, the statistics effectively count those requests which have been dealt with by each monitored body formally under the FOI Act. As such, the statistics report on how many such requests for information each monitored body has received and how they have implemented the Act’s requirements in providing responses. Direct comparisons between the statistics for different monitored bodies can therefore be made on this basis.

In summary, it is important to note that:

- (i) These statistics only cover “non-routine” information requests, and do not give a representative picture of all requests for information received in government.**
- (ii) There is likely to be a degree of inconsistency between monitored bodies’ interpretations of the definition of an “information request” for monitoring purposes. This should be borne in mind when using these statistics.**

Uses of the statistics

The main users of these statistics are departmental FOI teams responsible for coordinating responses and requests, Ministers and officials with responsibility for developing information access policy, and other non-governmental bodies with an interest in the accessibility of government information. The statistics are used to monitor the implementation of the FOI Act by central government, both as a whole and by each individual bodies included in the figures.

Appendix B – Government bodies included in these statistics

The statistics in this bulletin have been derived from monitoring returns completed by Freedom of Information officers in government departments during November 2010. This is the latest set of quarterly Freedom of Information statistics to be published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the government department which now has lead responsibility for the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The first eight bulletins in this series were published by the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

The formal monitoring work covers a total of 44 government bodies, including all major departments of state (i.e. Ministerial departments).

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

Coverage within the UK

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

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

The following is a full list of the bodies covered by the monitoring statistics in the third quarter of 2010.

Departments of State

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

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

Other monitored bodies

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

Notes

1. The following departmental changes occurred between the beginning of July 2008 and the end of September 2010, the period covered by the in-year performance and volume tables (Tables A, B and C) in this bulletin.

The **Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)** was created on 3 October 2008, bringing together responsibilities previously held by BERR and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The Q4 2008 figures for DECC relate to information requests received by the department between 3 October 2008 and 31 December

2008. Information requests relating to these responsibilities received on 1 and 2 October are counted under BERR or Defra as appropriate.

The **Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (CMEC)** was created in October 2008, and has assumed responsibility for the Child Support Agency (CSA), previously an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) whose requests were included within the DWP statistics. Requests to CMEC in Q4 2008 were included under the figures for DWP. Requests to CMEC are separately identified for the first time in the Q1 2009 statistics.

The **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)** was created on 5 June 2009, bringing together the responsibilities previously held by BERR and DIUS. The Q2 2009 statistics for BIS include requests received by BERR and DIUS between 1 April and 4 June. The figures in Tables A, B and C for earlier quarters relate to requests received by BERR.

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

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

2. Cabinet Office figures include requests that were addressed to 10 Downing Street.
3. The statistics on requests received by the Debt Management Office (DMO) have been counted on a different basis from Q1 2009 onwards compared to earlier quarters. It was identified that the figures for 2008 and earlier years included a significant number of public enquiries which do not fall under the definition of "non-routine" used for these monitoring statistics. For Q1 2009 onwards, the DMO's figures only report on "non-routine" information requests as required, but it has not been possible to revise figures for previous quarters. This definitional difference should be borne in mind when comparing DMO's statistics since Q1 2009 with those for earlier periods.
4. The figures provided by a number of Departments of State count the non-routine information requests received by one or more of their

agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. The departments and agencies affected are shown below.

Department for Transport

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

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

Department for Work and Pensions

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

- Appeals Agency
- Disability Carers Service
- Jobcentre plus
- Pension Service
- Rent Service

Department for Culture Media and Sport

Figures include requests received by the Royal Parks Agency.

HM Treasury

Figures include requests received by the Office for Budget Responsibility.

Home Office

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

Ministry of Defence

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

- ABRO (Army Base Repair Organisation) (Trading Fund)
- Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency
- Army Training and Recruiting Agency
- British Forces Post Office
- Defence Analytical Services Agency
- Defence Aviation Repair Agency (Trading Fund)
- Defence Bills Agency

Defence Communications Services Agency
Defence Estates
Defence Medical Education and Training Agency
Defence Procurement Agency
Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Trading Fund)
Defence Storage and Distribution Agency
Defence Transport and Movements Agency
Defence Vetting Agency
Disposal Services Agency
Duke of York's Royal Military School
Met Office (Trading Fund)
Ministry of Defence Police and Guarding Agency
Naval Recruiting and Training Agency
Pay and Personnel Agency
RAF Training Group Defence Agency
Service Children's Education
UK Hydrographic Office (Trading Fund)
Veterans Agency

Ministry of Justice

Figures include requests received by HM Courts 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/foi-step-by-step.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://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/policy/opengov/eir/index.htm>

5. These statistics are derived from monitoring returns submitted to MoJ in November 2010. They relate to information requests received during the period 1 July to 30 September 2010. The collection of monitoring data began on the 21st working day after the last day of this period (i.e. on 29 October 2010), since 20 working days is the statutory deadline for public authorities to respond to information requests under both the FoI Act and the EIRs.
6. Only “non-routine” information requests are counted in these statistics. Important notes on the scope and consistency of these statistics are given in **Appendix A**.
7. These statistics cover a total of 44 central government bodies. At the commencement of the Act in January 2005 there were 43 bodies covered by the monitoring statistics, but the precise number can change from time to time due to “Machinery of Government” changes. A full list of the monitored bodies in Q3 2010 is shown in **Appendix B**.
8. This is the twenty-third quarterly statistical bulletin on the implementation of the FoI Act. This publication has been prepared jointly by the Justice Statistics Analytical Services division and the Information Directorate of the Ministry of Justice.

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:

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Other queries about the Freedom of Information Act 2000 should be directed to:

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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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