

# **Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Statistics on implementation in central government Q3: July - September 2011**

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 2011 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 2011, are available via the links on the following pages of the Ministry of Justice and National Archives websites:

[www.justice.gov.uk/publications/statistics-and-data/foi/implementation.htm](http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/statistics-and-data/foi/implementation.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” 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 43 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 of 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 2009, 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 11,829 “non-routine” information requests were received during the third quarter (July to September) of 2011 (Q3) – an increase of 4 per cent on the third quarter of 2010.

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 three years. Some 96 per cent of the requests received during Q3 had been processed at the time of monitoring.

Departments of State reported receiving 7,738 “non-routine” information requests during Q3, an increase of 7 per cent on the corresponding quarter of the previous year. Other monitored bodies received 4,091 requests which is almost unchanged when compared to the third quarter of 2010.

Of this total of 11,829 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 2011, 93 per cent of all monitored bodies’ requests (excluding those “on hold” or lapsed) were “in time”, in that they were processed within the statutory deadline<sup>1</sup> or were subject to a permitted deadline extension. This is an increase on both the 90 per cent in Q2 2011 and the 92 per cent from Q3 2010, and reverses the slight drop in the first two quarters in 2011.

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

Of all “resolvable” requests received during Q3 of 2011 (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.

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<sup>1</sup> 20 working days generally, 30 working days for The National Archives.

# Commentary

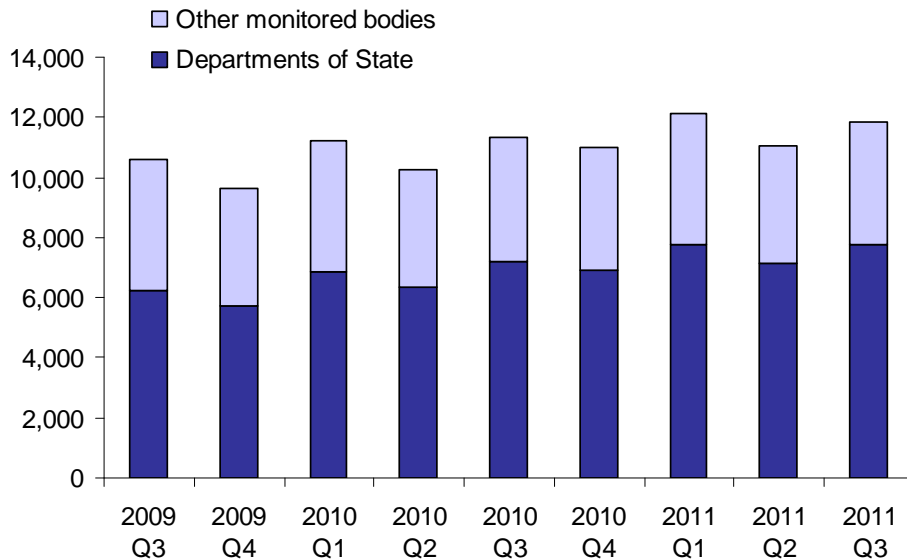
## Number of requests [see Table 1 and Table A]

Departments of State reported receiving a total of 7,738 information requests under the Freedom of Information Act and the associated Environmental Information Regulations during the quarter from 1 July to 30 September 2011 (Q3). Other monitored bodies reported having received 4,091 requests. Across all monitored bodies, therefore, a total of 11,829 requests were reported.

This overall total for Q3 of 2011 is 4 per cent greater than in the corresponding quarter last year (i.e. Q3 of 2010), and 7 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 three years

The number of requests received by Departments of State was 7 per cent more than during the same period last year, while the total received by other monitored bodies was almost unchanged. Departments of State accounted for 65 per cent of all requests received by monitored bodies in Q3 of 2011.

**Figure 1: Numbers of FoI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies, quarterly from Q3 2009**



Of the Departments of State, the Department for Work and Pensions reported having received 937 requests during Q3, the highest departmental total. The other departments that received more than 700 requests were:

- Ministry of Defence - 930
- Ministry of Justice - 835
- Home Office - 813
- Department for Transport - 812

Among other monitored bodies, the Health and Safety Executive reported having received 1,637 requests during Q3, while the National Archives received 715. The Health and Safety Executive is the only monitored body to have received more than 1,000 requests during each quarter since the Act was implemented. These two bodies combined account for 57 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 2011, accounting for 3 per cent of all requests received.

Of the monitored bodies with requests falling under the EIRs, the Rural Payments Agency, the Health and Safety Executive, the Department for Transport and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with more than 30 requests each, had the highest totals.

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

A large majority of requests (96 per cent) received during Q3 had been processed by the time monitoring information was collected. Of the 488 requests that were still being processed by the monitored bodies, 64 (13 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).

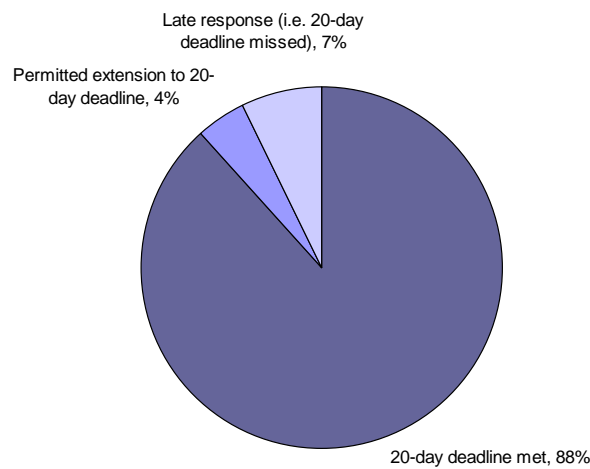
Across all monitored bodies:

- 88 per cent of requests received during Q3 of 2011 were sent a response within this standard deadline – 2 per cent higher than in Q2 2011.

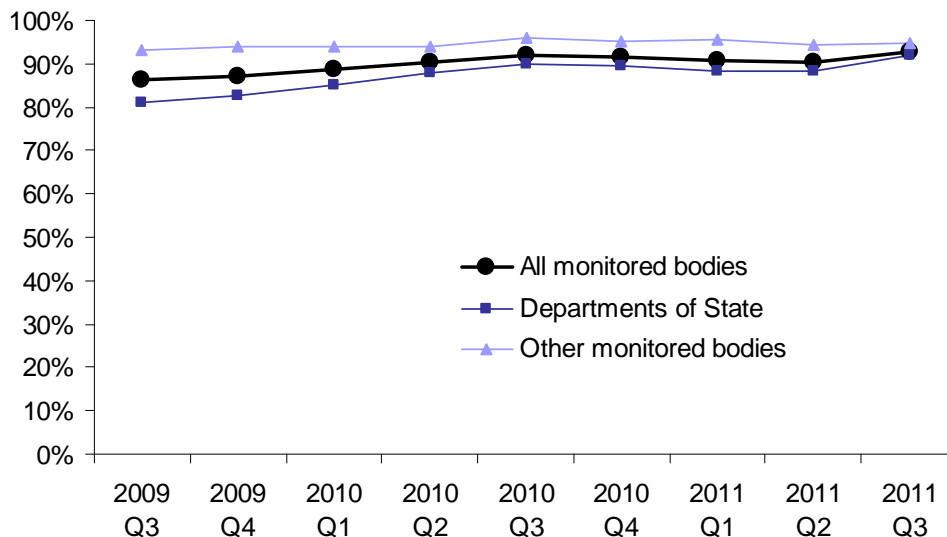
- 93 per cent of the requests received during Q3 were “in time”, in that they either received a response within the standard deadline or were subject to a permitted deadline extension. This is an increase on the 92 per cent from Q3 2010, and reverses the slight drop in the first two quarters in 2011.

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 2011**



**Figure 3: Percentage of FoI requests processed “in time” by Departments of State and other monitored bodies, quarterly from Q3 2009**



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

Of the 11,829 requests reported during Q3 of 2011 across all monitored bodies,

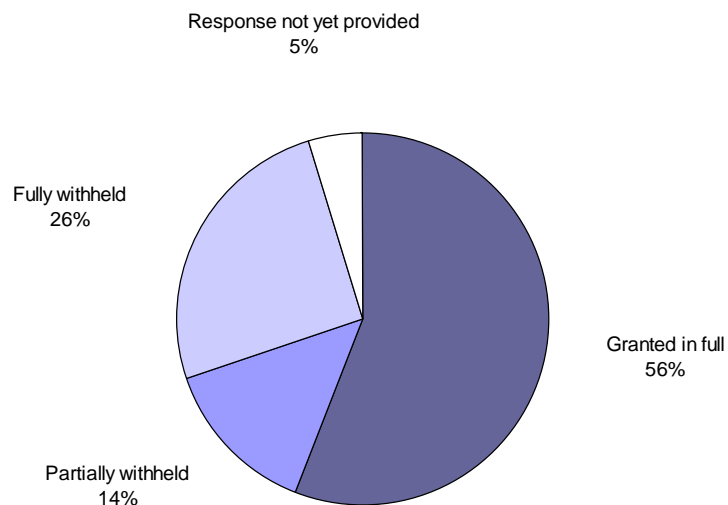
- 64 were “on hold” awaiting a fee payment;
- 2,168 requests sought information that was not held;
- 826 were responded to with “advice and assistance” because the body handling the request needed further information in order to identify the information being sought.

As a result, the remaining 8,771 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 2011,

- 56 per cent were granted in full, the same as in Q2 2011; the proportion of requests granted in full has generally followed a flat trend over the last two years;
- 14 per cent were withheld in part;
- 26 per cent were withheld in full;
- 5 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 2011**



### Use of exemptions and exceptions [see Table 4]

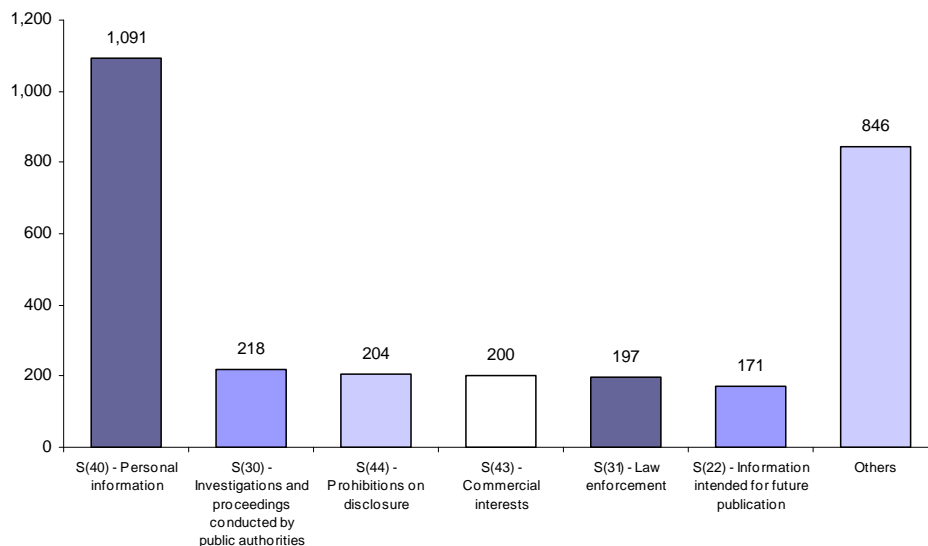
Under the FoI Act, a public authority can only refuse to provide requested information that it holds if:

- 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 2,423 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 2011**



The most commonly applied exemptions or exceptions in Q3 2011 were:

- Section 40 of the FoI Act (relating to personal information), which was applied to 1,091 requests,
- Section 30 (investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities), which was applied to 218 requests,
- and Section 34 (Prohibitions on disclosure) which was applied to 204 requests.



# Tables

## **Latest quarterly tables**

- Table 1. Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July – 30 September 2011, 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 2011
- Table 3. Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July – 30 September 2011
- Table 4. Exemptions and exceptions applied by monitored bodies when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 July – 30 September 2011

## **In-year performance and volume tables**

- Table A. Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 July 2009
- Table B. Proportion of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were answered “in time”, by quarter, since 1 July 2009
- Table C. Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 July 2009

**TABLE 1**

**Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2011, and their status at time of monitoring<sup>1</sup>**

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring <sup>1</sup>			
		Processed	"On hold" or lapsed <sup>2</sup>	Still being processed	Number handled under EIRs <sup>3</sup>
<b>TOTAL for all monitored bodies</b>	<b>11,829</b>	<b>11,341</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>351</b>
<b>TOTAL for Departments of State only</b>	<b>7,738</b>	<b>7,386</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>170</b>
<b>TOTAL for other monitored bodies</b>	<b>4,091</b>	<b>3,955</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>181</b>
<b><i>Departments of State</i></b>					
Attorney General's Office	36	36	0	0	0
Cabinet Office	426	393	0	33	0
Communities and Local Government	242	225	0	17	22
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	273	265	0	8	7
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	161	161	0	0	11
Department for Education	289	275	0	14	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	166	162	0	4	53
Department for International Development	125	121	0	4	4
Department for Transport #	812	790	0	22	31
Department for Work and Pensions #	937	929	0	8	3
Department of Energy and Climate Change	131	126	0	5	27
Department of Health	478	478	0	0	0
Export Credits Guarantee Department	18	17	0	1	0
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	292	262	0	30	1
HM Treasury #	654	608	0	46	0
Home Office #	813	794	0	19	0
Ministry of Defence #	930	838	0	92	6
Ministry of Justice #	835	793	0	42	1
Northern Ireland Office	51	49	0	2	1
Scotland Office	35	31	0	4	0
Wales Office	34	33	0	1	3

**TABLE 1 continued**

**Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2011, and their status at time of monitoring<sup>1</sup>**

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring <sup>1</sup>			
		Processed	"On hold" or lapsed <sup>2</sup>	Still being processed	Number handled under EIRs <sup>3</sup>
<b><i>Other bodies included in monitoring</i></b>					
Central Office of Information	7	7	0	0	0
Charity Commission	293	290	0	3	0
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	59	59	0	0	0
Crown Prosecution Service	132	126	0	6	0
Debt Management Office	11	11	0	0	0
Food Standards Agency	32	31	0	1	1
Health and Safety Executive	1,637	1,619	0	18	80
HM Land Registry	46	46	0	0	1
HM Revenue and Customs	461	455	0	6	1
National Archives	715	616	64	35	0
National Savings and Investments	24	24	0	0	0
Office for National Statistics	62	60	0	2	0
Office for Standards in Education	172	172	0	0	0
Office of Fair Trading	114	114	0	0	1
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	26	26	0	0	0
Office of Rail Regulation	41	41	0	0	0
Ordnance Survey	31	31	0	0	1
Royal Mint	5	5	0	0	0
Rural Payments Agency	118	117	0	1	96
Serious Fraud Office	22	22	0	0	0
Treasury Solicitor's Department	65	65	0	0	0
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	18	18	0	0	0

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

**Notes**

1 - Monitoring returns were submitted to the Ministry of Justice during November 2011

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 2011

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>11,765</b>	<b>10,399</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>TOTAL for Departments of State only</b>	<b>7,738</b>	<b>6,695</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>TOTAL for other monitored bodies</b>	<b>4,027</b>	<b>3,704</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>95%</b>
<b>Departments of State</b>						
Attorney General's Office	36	36	0	0	100%	100%
Cabinet Office	426	264	96	66	62%	85%
Communities and Local Government	242	203	19	20	84%	92%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	273	231	10	32	85%	88%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	161	155	6	0	96%	100%
Department for Education	289	230	4	55	80%	81%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	166	142	12	12	86%	93%
Department for International Development	125	115	7	3	92%	98%
Department for Transport #	812	729	25	58	90%	93%
Department for Work and Pensions #	937	898	4	35	96%	96%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	131	105	9	17	80%	87%
Department of Health	478	476	2	0	100%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	18	16	0	2	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	292	214	56	22	73%	92%
HM Treasury #	654	603	39	12	92%	98%
Home Office #	813	719	60	34	88%	96%
Ministry of Defence #	930	734	51	145	79%	84%
Ministry of Justice #	835	718	4	113	86%	86%
Northern Ireland Office	51	45	4	2	88%	96%
Scotland Office	35	30	5	0	86%	100%
Wales Office	34	32	1	1	94%	97%

**TABLE 2 continued**

**Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2011**

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>						
Central Office of Information	7	7	0	0	*	*
Charity Commission	293	276	0	17	94%	94%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	59	58	0	1	98%	98%
Crown Prosecution Service	132	117	0	15	89%	89%
Debt Management Office	11	11	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	32	28	3	1	88%	97%
Health and Safety Executive	1,637	1,525	23	89	93%	95%
HM Land Registry	46	46	0	0	100%	100%
HM Revenue and Customs	461	412	1	48	89%	90%
National Archives ^	651	583	66	2	90%	100%
National Savings and Investments	24	24	0	0	100%	100%
Office for National Statistics	62	42	10	10	68%	84%
Office for Standards in Education	172	169	0	3	98%	98%
Office of Fair Trading	114	109	0	5	96%	96%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	26	21	3	2	81%	92%
Office of Rail Regulation	41	38	1	2	93%	95%
Ordnance Survey	31	30	1	0	97%	100%
Royal Mint	5	4	0	1	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	118	111	6	1	94%	99%
Serious Fraud Office	22	12	0	10	55%	55%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	65	65	0	0	100%	100%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	18	16	0	2	*	*

**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 2011**

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>11,765</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>2,168</b>	<b>8,771</b>	<b>4,891</b>	<b>1,214</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>TOTAL for Departments of State only</b>	<b>7,738</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>1,375</b>	<b>5,858</b>	<b>3,281</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>1,526</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>TOTAL for other monitored bodies</b>	<b>4,027</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>2,913</b>	<b>1,610</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Departments of State</b>										
Attorney General's Office	36	0	22	14	6	5	3	0	*	*
Cabinet Office	426	70	96	260	110	39	78	33	42%	30%
Communities and Local Government	242	0	37	205	143	9	36	17	70%	18%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	273	4	63	206	92	41	65	8	45%	32%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	161	20	35	106	71	20	15	0	67%	14%
Department for Education	289	7	45	237	136	33	54	14	57%	23%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	166	7	22	137	89	23	21	4	65%	15%
Department for International Development	125	0	7	118	83	8	23	4	70%	19%
Department for Transport #	812	2	199	611	465	54	70	22	76%	11%
Department for Work and Pensions #	937	4	21	912	583	87	234	8	64%	26%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	131	3	24	104	41	25	33	5	39%	32%
Department of Health	478	11	106	361	250	34	77	0	69%	21%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	18	0	1	17	14	1	1	1	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	292	41	51	200	68	45	57	30	34%	29%
HM Treasury #	654	111	157	386	173	18	149	46	45%	39%
Home Office #	813	91	180	542	277	92	154	19	51%	28%
Ministry of Defence #	930	50	148	732	436	59	145	92	60%	20%
Ministry of Justice #	835	73	124	638	199	96	301	42	31%	47%
Northern Ireland Office	51	0	13	38	23	8	5	2	61%	13%
Scotland Office	35	7	7	21	13	1	3	4	62%	14%
Wales Office	34	4	17	13	9	1	2	1	*	*

**TABLE 3 continued**  
**Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2011**

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>										
Central Office of Information	7	0	3	4	4	0	0	0	*	*
Charity Commission	293	9	34	250	171	61	15	3	68%	6%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	59	0	2	57	37	5	15	0	65%	26%
Crown Prosecution Service	132	16	14	102	46	9	41	6	45%	40%
Debt Management Office	11	0	1	10	10	0	0	0	*	*
Food Standards Agency	32	1	8	23	13	7	2	1	57%	9%
Health and Safety Executive	1,637	106	551	980	521	203	238	18	53%	24%
HM Land Registry	46	2	5	39	36	3	0	0	92%	0%
HM Revenue and Customs	461	10	42	409	183	33	187	6	45%	46%
National Archives	651	95	70	486	279	71	101	35	57%	21%
National Savings and Investments	24	0	1	23	21	0	2	0	91%	9%
Office for National Statistics	62	1	5	56	45	3	6	2	80%	11%
Office for Standards in Education	172	18	20	134	57	53	24	0	43%	18%
Office of Fair Trading	114	21	5	88	18	15	55	0	20%	63%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	26	5	2	19	11	5	3	0	*	*
Office of Rail Regulation	41	4	8	29	22	3	4	0	76%	14%
Ordnance Survey	31	0	3	28	22	3	3	0	79%	11%
Royal Mint	5	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	118	27	13	78	49	14	14	1	63%	18%
Serious Fraud Office	22	2	3	17	7	7	3	0	*	*
Treasury Solicitor's Department	65	3	0	62	42	19	1	0	68%	2%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	18	1	3	14	11	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 exceptions<sup>1</sup> applied by monitored bodies\* when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2011

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>1,306</b>	<b>1,117</b>	<b>2,423</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	145	26	171
S(23) - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters	57	10	67
S(24) - National security	56	1	57
S(26) - Defence	15	2	17
S(27) - International relations	65	12	77
S(28) - Relations within the United Kingdom	2	0	2
S(29) - The economy	5	1	6
S(30) - Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities	10	208	218
S(31) - Law enforcement	109	88	197
S(32) - Court records, etc	37	4	41
S(33) - Audit functions	0	5	5
S(34) - Parliamentary privilege	0	0	0
S(35) - Formulation of Government policy, etc	152	3	155
S(36) - Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs	66	0	66
S(37) - Communications with Her Majesty, etc and honours	14	5	19
S(38) - Health and Safety	20	17	37
S(39) - Environmental information	_3	_3	_3
S(40) - Personal information	522	569	1,091
S(41) - Information provided in confidence	67	67	134
S(42) - Legal professional privilege	29	13	42
S(43) - Commercial interests	168	32	200
S(44) - Prohibitions on disclosure	30	174	204
<b>Number of requests where each exception (listed in Part 3 of EIRs) was applied</b>			
3(a) - Exempt personal data	25	18	43
4(b) - Manifestly unreasonable	13	3	16
4(c) - Too general	4	0	4
4(d) - Work in progress / incomplete data	10	0	10
4(e) - Internal communications	15	1	16
5(a) - Adverse effect on international relations, defence, national security, public safety	5	0	5
5(b) - Adverse effect on course of justice or conduct of enquiries	1	0	1
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	17	2	19
5(f) - Adverse effect on interests of person who provided the information	3	2	5
5(g) - Adverse effect on protection of environment to which information relates	0	0	0
Environmental Exceptions	<b>94</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>121</b>

#### 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 2009

Government body	2009		2010				2011		
	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
<b>TOTAL for all monitored bodies</b>	<b>10,597</b>	<b>9,612</b>	<b>11,199</b>	<b>10,286</b>	<b>11,339</b>	<b>10,972</b>	<b>12,128</b>	<b>11,029</b>	<b>11,829</b>
<b>TOTAL for Departments of State only</b>	<b>6,208</b>	<b>5,736</b>	<b>6,857</b>	<b>6,339</b>	<b>7,200</b>	<b>6,898</b>	<b>7,783</b>	<b>7,124</b>	<b>7,738</b>
<b>TOTAL for other monitored bodies</b>	<b>4,389</b>	<b>3,876</b>	<b>4,342</b>	<b>3,947</b>	<b>4,139</b>	<b>4,074</b>	<b>4,345</b>	<b>3,905</b>	<b>4,091</b>
<b><i>Departments of State</i></b>									
Attorney General's Office	27	28	28	33	37	29	31	42	36
Cabinet Office	261	193	236	235	307	303	395	349	426
Communities and Local Government	237	198	243	218	237	235	250	221	242
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	244	182	279	231	244	280	293	256	273
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	164	122	165	119	165	158	142	195	161
Department for Education <sup>1</sup>	251	173	180	220	263	217	328	245	289
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	159	142	143	127	142	139	183	150	166
Department for International Development	88	91	92	104	120	86	110	122	125
Department for Transport #	707	629	794	605	735	753	898	710	812
Department for Work and Pensions #	617	600	797	748	777	823	877	763	937
Department of Energy and Climate Change	88	89	171	138	144	123	125	115	131
Department of Health	503	486	510	465	522	526	617	417	478
Export Credits Guarantee Department	12	11	23	10	20	12	23	36	18
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	321	304	311	250	310	313	367	344	292
Government Equalities Office	-	-	30	15	29	32	21	-	-
HM Treasury #	315	291	438	523	666	435	356	480	654
Home Office #	577	637	763	699	781	826	866	786	813
Ministry of Defence #	766	724	738	693	718	767	957	830	930
Ministry of Justice #	732	731	808	805	854	707	847	901	835
Northern Ireland Office	82	59	66	42	56	50	37	61	51
Scotland Office	39	30	30	28	34	47	18	54	35
Wales Office	18	16	12	31	39	37	42	47	34

**TABLE A continued**

**Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 July 2009**

Government body	2009		2010				2011		
	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
<b>Other bodies included in monitoring</b>									
Central Office of Information	14	8	13	12	16	13	12	10	7
Charity Commission	149	133	202	185	241	254	268	276	293
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	59	62	55	47	44	49	70	79	59
Crown Prosecution Service	119	136	135	103	124	107	104	100	132
Debt Management Office	6	4	10	9	15	11	18	11	11
Food Standards Agency	36	36	57	29	47	33	30	24	32
Health and Safety Executive	1,589	1,523	1,562	1,656	1,586	1,617	1,757	1,620	1,637
HM Land Registry	29	47	49	36	49	41	61	57	46
HM Revenue and Customs	409	339	391	369	403	459	429	461	461
National Archives	1,010	787	927	733	817	717	756	506	715
National Savings and Investments	44	18	23	20	27	22	26	29	24
Office for National Statistics	33	37	62	52	30	53	89	60	62
Office for Standards in Education	292	272	314	273	246	238	241	208	172
Office of Fair Trading	162	139	123	118	157	139	132	107	114
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	42	45	60	36	38	17	30	38	26
Office of Rail Regulation	59	61	67	43	33	52	47	42	41
Ordnance Survey	67	41	42	17	17	27	23	28	31
Royal Mint	11	4	8	5	3	5	4	4	5
Rural Payments Agency	84	75	91	86	83	84	105	101	118
Serious Fraud Office	24	23	33	20	33	25	24	26	22
Treasury Solicitor's Department	106	64	98	79	100	97	101	89	65
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	45	22	20	19	30	14	18	29	18

**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 2010 are for the Department for Children, Schools and Families. 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 2009 (see footnote)

Government body	2009		2010				2011		
	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
<b>TOTAL for all monitored bodies</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>93%</b>
<b>TOTAL for Departments of State only</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>92%</b>
<b>TOTAL for other monitored bodies</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>95%</b>
<i>Departments of State</i>									
Attorney General's Office	96%	96%	96%	94%	100%	100%	100%	98%	100%
Cabinet Office	91%	86%	90%	88%	85%	77%	42%	55%	85%
Communities and Local Government	95%	95%	94%	96%	97%	96%	96%	93%	92%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	79%	85%	95%	95%	96%	93%	93%	83%	88%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	98%	98%	98%	100%	99%	97%	99%	100%	100%
Department for Education <sup>1</sup>	80%	77%	91%	89%	69%	69%	72%	87%	81%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	85%	88%	93%	87%	94%	94%	91%	92%	93%
Department for International Development	98%	93%	96%	97%	98%	95%	98%	99%	98%
Department for Transport #	94%	95%	94%	96%	92%	89%	92%	91%	93%
Department for Work and Pensions #	79%	79%	77%	82%	96%	97%	98%	95%	96%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	80%	87%	95%	96%	91%	89%	89%	91%	87%
Department of Health	96%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	*	96%	*	*	*	78%	69%	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	96%	93%	94%	98%	90%	93%	95%	94%	92%
Government Equalities Office	-	-	77%	*	97%	84%	100%	-	-
HM Treasury #	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	98%	98%	98%	98%
Home Office #	67%	68%	81%	80%	88%	90%	95%	96%	96%
Ministry of Defence #	49%	53%	55%	69%	66%	71%	76%	81%	84%
Ministry of Justice #	77%	81%	81%	84%	89%	88%	84%	75%	86%
Northern Ireland Office	99%	90%	95%	95%	100%	98%	97%	98%	96%
Scotland Office	56%	80%	73%	86%	100%	98%	*	98%	100%
Wales Office	*	*	*	97%	92%	97%	90%	83%	97%

**TABLE B continued**

**Proportion of non-routine information requests received that were answered "in time", by quarter, since 1 July 2009 (see footnote)**

Government body	2009		2010				2011		
	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
<b>Other bodies included in monitoring</b>									
Central Office of Information	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Charity Commission	91%	95%	93%	96%	98%	93%	97%	91%	94%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	71%	85%	64%	98%	100%	96%	99%	100%	98%
Crown Prosecution Service	96%	99%	96%	92%	95%	98%	93%	92%	89%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	100%	97%	91%	100%	94%	97%	100%	100%	97%
Health and Safety Executive	92%	92%	93%	93%	93%	93%	93%	94%	95%
HM Land Registry	97%	94%	96%	92%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
HM Revenue and Customs	85%	88%	89%	92%	91%	92%	94%	92%	90%
National Archives ^	97%	99%	98%	97%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
National Savings and Investments	100%	*	96%	*	100%	95%	100%	93%	100%
Office for National Statistics	94%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	78%	84%
Office for Standards in Education	99%	95%	97%	99%	100%	100%	100%	99%	98%
Office of Fair Trading	96%	94%	98%	92%	97%	96%	95%	98%	96%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	95%	87%	97%	89%	89%	*	90%	87%	92%
Office of Rail Regulation	100%	98%	94%	88%	97%	98%	96%	100%	95%
Ordnance Survey	97%	98%	100%	*	*	100%	91%	100%	100%
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	90%	92%	75%	85%	98%	99%	100%	93%	99%
Serious Fraud Office	38%	96%	88%	*	100%	92%	92%	100%	55%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	99%	97%	99%	99%	100%	99%	99%	99%	100%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	100%	77%	*	*	97%	*	*	86%	*

# - 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 2010 are for the Department for Children, Schools and Families. 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 2009 (see footnote)

Government body	2009		2010				2011		
	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
<b>TOTAL for all monitored bodies</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>TOTAL for Departments of State only</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>TOTAL for other monitored bodies</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>55%</b>
<i>Departments of State</i>									
Attorney General's Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Cabinet Office	29%	39%	24%	38%	26%	26%	12%	23%	42%
Communities and Local Government	69%	78%	77%	73%	73%	64%	78%	76%	70%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	46%	47%	51%	50%	54%	53%	43%	32%	45%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	66%	66%	64%	70%	56%	72%	61%	61%	67%
Department for Education <sup>1</sup>	70%	75%	72%	82%	68%	72%	66%	63%	57%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	69%	65%	62%	67%	70%	62%	65%	62%	65%
Department for International Development	66%	51%	52%	52%	68%	76%	61%	68%	70%
Department for Transport #	70%	73%	74%	71%	72%	72%	70%	77%	76%
Department for Work and Pensions #	64%	63%	55%	72%	63%	65%	63%	61%	64%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	50%	46%	46%	53%	48%	47%	45%	59%	39%
Department of Health	75%	76%	70%	70%	73%	71%	63%	69%	69%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	*	52%	*	*	*	*	70%	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	30%	33%	26%	33%	28%	39%	28%	21%	34%
Government Equalities Office	-	-	77%	*	93%	61%	*	-	*
HM Treasury #	52%	56%	50%	70%	60%	50%	54%	45%	45%
Home Office #	40%	50%	47%	54%	51%	54%	51%	51%	51%
Ministry of Defence #	44%	45%	46%	65%	58%	63%	57%	60%	60%
Ministry of Justice #	31%	26%	28%	31%	33%	31%	27%	26%	31%
Northern Ireland Office	56%	43%	45%	69%	68%	50%	*	71%	61%
Scotland Office	43%	74%	55%	*	58%	44%	*	68%	62%
Wales Office	*	*	*	*	73%	81%	38%	52%	*

**TABLE C continued**

**Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 July 2009 (see footnote)**

Government body	2009		2010				2011		
	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
<b>Other bodies included in monitoring</b>									
Central Office of Information	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Charity Commission	66%	64%	66%	64%	64%	60%	66%	67%	68%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission	77%	44%	66%	56%	57%	61%	72%	71%	65%
Crown Prosecution Service	62%	66%	60%	49%	51%	62%	52%	48%	45%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Food Standards Agency	38%	15%	39%	38%	32%	31%	63%	*	57%
Health and Safety Executive	52%	50%	53%	53%	52%	51%	53%	52%	53%
HM Land Registry	97%	88%	91%	93%	91%	94%	76%	84%	92%
HM Revenue and Customs	45%	49%	53%	49%	47%	41%	48%	41%	45%
National Archives	63%	59%	56%	48%	48%	45%	62%	57%	57%
National Savings and Investments	84%	*	64%	*	46%	68%	76%	73%	91%
Office for National Statistics	70%	60%	77%	74%	77%	91%	72%	78%	80%
Office for Standards in Education	65%	64%	61%	62%	61%	67%	63%	51%	43%
Office of Fair Trading	34%	35%	41%	31%	26%	24%	14%	19%	20%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	77%	70%	67%	68%	67%	*	43%	48%	*
Office of Rail Regulation	74%	78%	82%	59%	*	75%	61%	80%	76%
Ordnance Survey	71%	76%	100%	*	*	65%	*	*	79%
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	77%	80%	72%	90%	78%	72%	58%	70%	63%
Serious Fraud Office	*	*	48%	*	*	24%	*	*	*
Treasury Solicitor's Department	23%	30%	37%	44%	49%	41%	35%	57%	68%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	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 2010 are for the Department for Children, Schools and Families. 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 2011. 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 43 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 2011.

### **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**

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 2009 and the end of September 2011, the period covered by the in-year performance and volume tables (Tables A, B and C) in this bulletin.

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

comparisons with earlier quarters can still be made. Since June 2011, the GEO has sat within the Home Office, and so from Q2 2011 onwards figures for requests received by the Government Equalities Office requests have been included within the Home Office's statistics.

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 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. Figures for Q2 2011 onwards include requests received by the Government Equalities Office.

### Ministry of Defence

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

- Defence Support Group (formerly ABRO and DARA)
- Defence Science and Technology Laboratory
- UK Hydrographic Office
- Met Office
- MOD Police and Guarding Agency
- Service Children's Education
- Service Personnel and Veterans Agency

### Ministry of Justice

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

## Explanatory notes

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

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

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

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

2. The statistics in this bulletin relate to the handling by central government bodies of information requests received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol 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 Fol 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 Fol Act. Further information is available at:

[www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/freedom-and-rights/freedom-of-information/index.htm](http://www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/freedom-and-rights/freedom-of-information/index.htm)

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

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

5. These statistics are derived from monitoring returns submitted to MoJ in November 2011. They relate to information requests received during the period 1 July to 30 September 2011. The collection of monitoring data began on the 21st working day after the last day of this period (i.e. on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011), 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 43 central government bodies. At the commencement of the Act in January 2005 there were also 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 2011 is shown in **Appendix B**.

### **Symbols and conventions**

The following symbols have been used throughout the tables in this bulletin:

- = Not applicable
- 0 = Nil

## Contact points for further information

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

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

Hannah Murdoch  
Tel: 020 3334 3548  
Email: [Hannah.murdoch@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Hannah.murdoch@justice.gsi.gov.uk)

Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

Iain Bell  
Chief Statistician  
Justice Statistics Analytical Services  
Ministry of Justice  
7th Floor  
102 Petty France  
London  
SW1H 9AJ  
Tel: 020 3334 3737  
Email: [statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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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