



Ministry of
JUSTICE

Statistical notice

Changes to 2011 edition of the
statistical bulletin 'Annual report on
freedom of information in central
government'

**Statistics on the handling of requests for information made under the
Freedom of Information Act by central government bodies**

Published February 2010

Planned changes to 2011 edition of the statistical bulletin 'Annual report on freedom of information in central government'

Introduction

1. This note is to advise users of planned changes to next year's edition of the Ministry of Justice statistical bulletin 'Annual report on freedom of information in central government', which is due to be published in April 2011 and will report on requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act during 2010.

Summary

2. The annual bulletin presents statistics on the initial handling of freedom of requests by central government departments, including the time taken to respond to requests, request outcomes, and any exemptions used when withholding information, as well as statistics on the duration of public interest test extensions, the number and duration of internal reviews, and requests where an appeal was made to the Information Commissioner against non-disclosure. Data are currently obtained from statistical returns submitted by 43 central government bodies, including all major departments of state.
3. The planned changes are to expand the data collected in relation to the durations of public interest test extensions (PITs) and internal reviews (IRs).

Further Details

4. The 2011 edition of the annual bulletin, reporting on freedom of information requests received by monitored bodies in 2010, will include a greater range of summary statistics on the durations of PITs and IRs than in previous years. This follows user feedback that the existing statistics do not identify PITs and IRs that are particularly long-running and do not record any information about the durations of PITs and IRs that are still ongoing when each year's statistics are collected.
5. Currently the freedom of information monitoring statistics report on those public interest test extensions and internal reviews where the initial request was first received during the year, and the PIT or IR had been completed by the time the annual statistics are collected (usually in the February of the following year).
6. Data on the durations of PITs and IRs are collected in a number of time bands (e.g. "5 working days or less", "between 6 and 10 working days", etc). The uppermost time band for the duration of PITs is "more than 40 working days", while the uppermost time band for the duration of IRs is "more than 60 working days". No data is gathered on the durations of

those PITs and IRs which had not been completed by the time the annual statistics are collected.

7. The specific changes that will be made to the durations data are:
 - a) Further time bands for durations of PITs and IRs will be added, so that the uppermost time band in each case is "more than 100 working days".
 - b) New statistics will be collected from each monitored body on the eventual durations of those PITs and IRs which were recorded as being ongoing in the previous year's annual statistics.
8. All the other statistics on freedom of information requests which appear in the annual bulletin will continue to be published in the 2011 edition. Please note that the changes described in this statistical notice will not take effect for the 2010 edition of the annual statistics, which will report on freedom of information requests made to monitored bodies during 2009 and is expected to be published in April 2010.

Contact details and further information

For queries, comments or further information on the issues set out in this note please contact:

Justice Statistics Analytical Services Division
Ministry of Justice
7th floor
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

Tel: 020 3334 3737

Email: statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

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