

## MOD FOI/EIR Compliance Notes

### Initial Handling of Requests for Information

#### CN10: Where and How to Search and find Information

##### *Document history*

<b>Version No</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Date Issued</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
1	CIO-3-19-1-3	September 2012	September 2013

##### *What this is about:*

This note provides an overview of where and how to locate information in scope of a request for information (RFI). It also outlines the process for obtaining documents from the MOD archive.

##### *Detail:*

Remember you are answering the request on behalf of MOD, not just in respect of the MOD business unit to whom the RFI has been allocated and the extent of your searches must reflect this. As a minimum the lead branch should consider the following sources of information:

- Filing systems - both paper and electronic
- Computers and IT networks including within email accounts (both role and personal accounts), personal drives, removable media or other storage systems (See the Info Access Blog Post on [Guidance on official information held in private email accounts published by the ICO](#))
- Unstructured paper records holdings, this may include notebooks, logbooks, information contained in wall charts
- Video/audio tapes
- Archives including local archives, site archives, and corporate archives (including the main MOD and TNT Archives)
- Other parts of MOD. Efforts should be made to ask other parts of MOD to search for information if it is reasonable to believe that the information requested may be held by them. It is not a requirement to search for files that have already been transferred to TNA as they are a separate public authority.
- Diary or Calendar entries ( eg outlook or paper-based diaries)
- Check if the information requested is available in the public domain i.e. MOD website or Hansard etc

NB: This is not an exhaustive list.

##### *How to find Information:*

- The AIT has a history of most requests made under FOI and EIRs and thus can point desk officers to previous responses to similar requests and show what information sources were searched and where information was found.
- The FOI Focal Point network will also be able to assist those searching for information, as they will have built up expertise in how requests are handled and what information resources need to be searched.

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- The AIT will prompt users to record what efforts were made to find information requested. This will be especially important if the response is that we do not hold the information in scope of the request. In the event of an appeal, MOD needs to be able to show it made a reasonable effort to find the information.

### Audit Trail

It is important that you keep a record of searches undertaken including details of areas/records searched, key search words used and the time taken to conduct searches even where the search proves to be unsuccessful in locating relevant information. This information may be required by the Department at a later date should the requester seek an independent internal review of the handling of the request or makes a complaint to the Information Commissioner.

### The MOD Archive

TNT UK Ltd holds the contract for the MOD archive for records which have up to a SECRET classification and is responsible for the delivery and transport of files to key MOD locations in London and to Glasgow, Norcross, Bristol and Droitwich. The ownership of records stored by TNT Ltd will remain with MOD. All policy matters regarding retention, review and destruction of material will be the responsibility of Corporate Memory.

The security classification of material to be stored by TNT will remain as at present and will be limited to material no higher than 'Secret'.

Contact details for depositing new files and for retrieving and returning files is:

- a) By post: Helpdesk, TNT Archive Services,  
Tetron Point,  
William Nadin Way,  
Swadlincote Derbyshire, DE11 0BB
- b) By Fax: 01827 312515
- c) By e-mail: [pangovarchive@tnt.co.uk](mailto:pangovarchive@tnt.co.uk)

TNT operates a **help desk** facility for enquiries concerning the deposit of new files and for retrieving and returning files. The telephone number for the help desk is 0845 601 0610.

**For further help or assistance please contact CIO-CI-Access.**