



Ministry
of Justice



Freedom of Information Statistics: Implementation in Central Government

July – September 2014

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

Published 11 December 2014



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Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and the associated Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) came fully into force on 1 January 2005. This bulletin presents statistics on their implementation within central government for the quarterly period July to September 2014 (with tables in Annex A covering the period from Q3 2012 until Q3 2014).

The previous quarterly and annual bulletins, together covering the period from January 2005 to June 2014, are available via the links on the following pages of the Gov.uk and National Archives websites:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-justice/series/government-Fol-statistics (for 2010-2014);

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/freedomofinformationquarterly-archive.htm> (for 2006-2009);

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.dca.gov.uk/Fol/reference/statisticsAndReports.htm> (for 2005 - 2007).

The statistics in this bulletin relate to the handling of written 'non-routine', or non-regular requests for information received by monitored bodies during the relevant time period. Further definitions of these requests can be found in Annex B¹, which defines the information that is in scope of these statistics. This bulletin also includes requests for information that is already reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means, which are exempted under Section 21 of the FOI Act. The total number of 'routine' (e.g., an organisation may regularly request the same statistics every quarter) information requests is not known; therefore, figures in this publication should be considered a lower bound for all information requests received by the monitored bodies.

This bulletin presents monitoring statistics for a total of 41 central government bodies, which includes all major Departments of State. Over 100,000 bodies are subject to the FOI Act² and a substantial number of FOI requests are sent to those which are non-monitored. The trends that apply to monitored central government bodies cannot be assumed to apply universally.

¹ Or via:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/262792/25section2.pdf

² www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo060725/text/60725w0081.htm#06072811011026

More information regarding EIRs is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-Folaeirs>.

Departmental changes

Please refer to Annex C for a full list of monitored bodies³. It details departmental changes since Q2 2012 and the inclusion and exclusion of subordinate agencies.

³ The statistics reflect the management and implementation of the FOI Act by each monitored body and comparisons between departments can be made on this basis. There could be a degree of inconsistency in the way in which bodies have interpreted and applied the definition of an “information request” for monitoring purposes – please see Annex B for further information.

Key findings

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows individuals to request information from public bodies. This bulletin presents statistics on its use in 41 central government bodies – 21 Departments of State and 20 ‘other monitored bodies’ – and covers the third quarter of 2014 (July - September).

Number of requests [see Tables A1 & A2]

Between Q3 2006 and Q3 2014 the number of FOI requests recorded by monitored bodies increased by 63%. In the third quarter of 2014, monitored central government bodies received 11,234 non-routine Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. This is 455 (4%) fewer than the number received in Q2 2014 (the previous quarter), and 2,136 (16%) fewer requests than in Q3 2013 (the equivalent quarter last year). This is the first time since Q3 2007 that the number of FOI requests received has fallen in two consecutive quarters.

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

92% of requests received during Q3 2014 received a response within the statutory deadline or were responded to within a permitted deadline extension. This is 1 percentage point higher than the previous quarter, but roughly the same as the equivalent period in the last reporting year. Across all monitored bodies in Q3 2014, the proportion of requests that received a response ‘on time’ was between 62% and 100%.

Initial outcomes of requests [see Tables A5 & A6]

Of all requests received during Q3 2014 where it was possible to make a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought (‘resolvable requests’, of which there were 8,399), 49% were granted in full and 32% were withheld in full. The remainder were either granted in part or a response had not yet been provided by the time of this bulletin.

The percentage of resolvable requests granted in full has fallen by 6 percentage points compared to Q3 2013, and fallen 1 percentage point from Q2 2014.

Exemptions and exceptions [see Table A7]

In Q3 2014, one or more exemptions or exceptions were applied to 2,618 requests, which is 31% of all resolvable requests. The most common exemption, as in previous quarters, was section 40 (personal data), which was used 1,197 times (46% of all exemptions).

Section 21 [See Table A8]

There were 547 Section 21 exemptions used (where a Section 21 was the only exemption used in a response) in Q3 2014. 93% of these were provided within the 20-day deadline.

1. Number of requests [see Tables A1 & A2]

In July to September (Q3) 2014 the monitored central government bodies received a total of 11,234 non-routine FOI (Freedom of Information Act) requests. This is 455 (4%) fewer than the number received in Q2 2014, and 2,136 (16%) fewer requests than were received in Q3 2013.

Figure 1 shows that following an upwards trend since 2006, the number of requests remained fairly stable over 2013 (despite considerable quarter-on-quarter variation), before falling for two consecutive quarters in Q2 and Q3 of 2014. This is the first time since Q3 2007 that the number of freedom of information requests received by monitored bodies has fallen for two quarters in a row. It follows the initial surge in requests in 2005, when the FOI Act was first introduced.

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

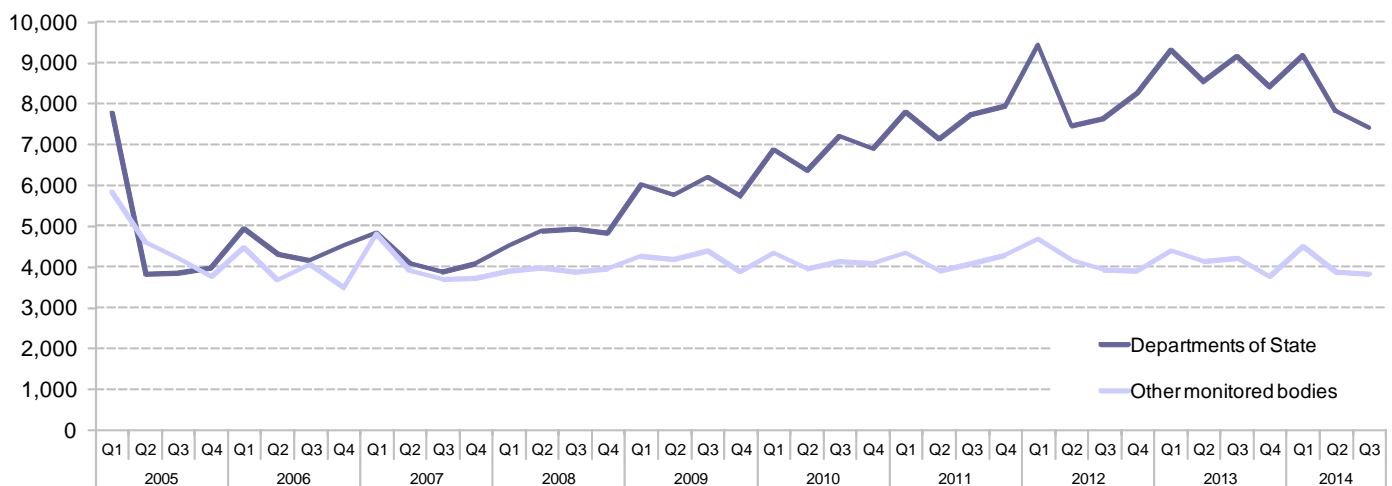


Figure 1 illustrates that the general increase in requests over the past 6 years has been driven by an increase in those received by Departments of State. These reported receiving a total of 7,406 information requests in Q3 2014, 5% less than Q2 2014, and 19% fewer when compared with Q3 2013. Other monitored bodies reported having received 3,828 requests, a decrease of 1% from Q2 2014 and of 9% from Q3 2013.

Departments of State accounted for 66% of all requests received by monitored bodies in Q3 of 2014. This is a fall of 3 percentage points since Q3 2013 but a rise of 12 percentage points since Q2 2006 (54%).

This follows the general trend and is the first time since Q3 2007 that the number of freedom of information requests received by Departments of State has fallen for two quarters in a row. The Departments of State that reported the biggest falls in absolute volume of requests compared to Q3 2013 were:

- Department for Transport, by 472 requests (a 44% decrease);
- Department for Work and Pensions, by 409 requests (a 27% decrease);
- HM Treasury, by 317 requests (a 49% decrease).

However, of the Departments of State, there were still some bodies that reported having received over 1,000 requests in Q3 2014. These were:

- Ministry of Justice, 1,234 (a 9% increase);
- Department for Work and Pensions, 1,104 (a 4% increase).

Among other monitored bodies, the Health and Safety Executive reported having received 1,243 requests during Q3, while the National Archives received 783. These two bodies combined account for 53% of all requests received by all the other monitored bodies. Therefore, the trends for the other monitored bodies group as a whole are heavily dependant on the trends for these two particular bodies.

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, although the volume of requests that it receives has fallen by 12% in the last year. This high volume of requests is partly due to the nature of requests it receives: a large percentage are from solicitors representing an injured party, seeking disclosure of information collected during an investigation of a workplace incident.

Environmental Information Regulations

Monitoring statistics also show the number of non-routine information requests that fell fully or mostly under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs). There were 487 such requests during the third quarter of 2014, accounting for 4% of all requests received. The number of requests handled under EIR is almost exactly the same as the previous quarter (up by 1 request), but down 3% from Q3 2013.

2. Timeliness of response to requests [see Tables A3 & A4]

The FOI Act requires public bodies to respond to written requests for information within 20 working days of receipt (the standard deadline)⁴. In limited circumstances, additional time is allowed for the consideration of public interest. Requests answered within this agreed extended time period are classed as “in time”. These timeliness statistics give a measure of how well monitored bodies are complying with the Act.

Across all monitored bodies, 87% of requests received during Q3 of 2014 were sent a response within the 20 (or 30 for the National Archives) working day deadline – this is

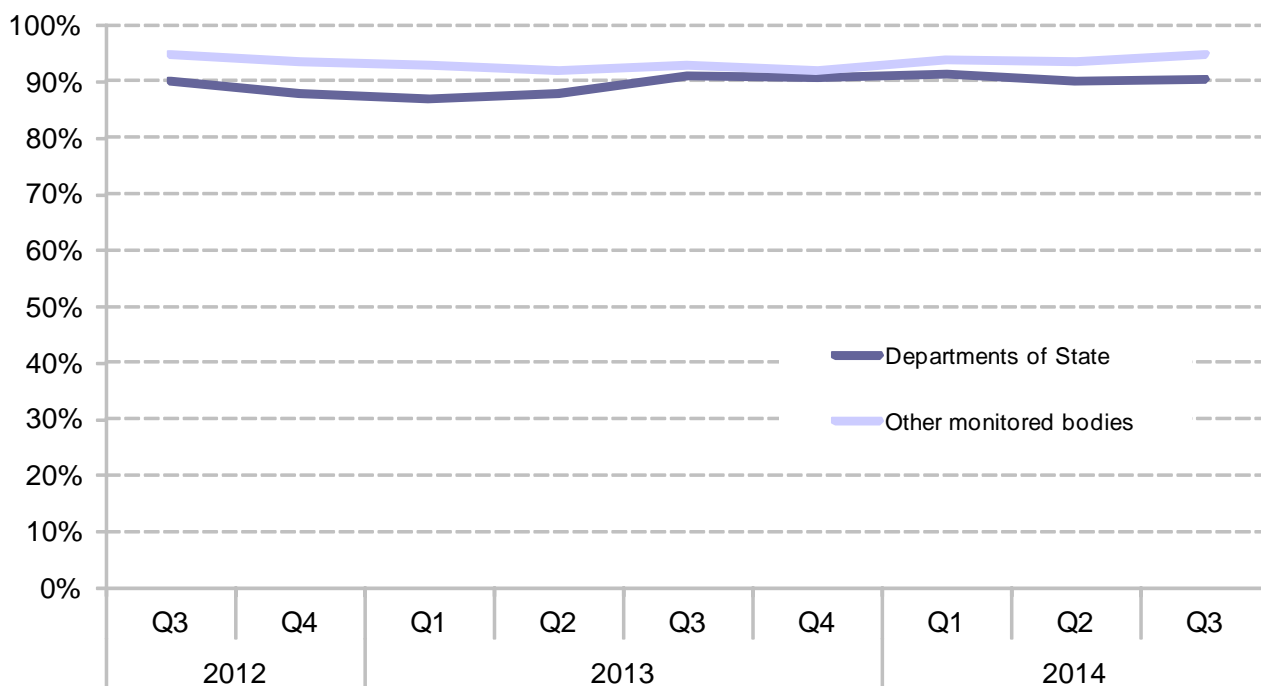
⁴ A 30 working deadline applies where requests relate wholly or partly to information transferred to the National Archives. They have therefore provided response timeliness information on this basis.

equivalent to the figure for both Q2 2014 and Q3 2013. In Q3 2014, 92% of the requests received were handled 'in time', in that they either received a response within the standard deadline or were subject to a permitted deadline extension. This is a rise of 1 percentage point from the previous quarter but represents no change when compared to Q3 2013.

A comparison between all monitored bodies showed that between 54% and 100% of requests received during Q3 of 2014 were responded to within the 20-day deadline, and between 62% and 100% of requests received in the same period were responded to 'in time'. However, the majority of departments respond to requests 'in time' over 90% of the time, and within the original 20-day deadline over 80% of the time.

Figure 2 shows that despite the rise in requests, average⁵ timeliness (i.e. answering requests 'in time') for monitored bodies has been at least 89% for the last year. It also illustrates that other monitored bodies are, on average, marginally timelier than Departments of State, and this difference is increasing. Both Departments of State and other monitored bodies have improved their timeliness from lows in Q1 2013, with the rise seemingly continuing for other monitored bodies.

Figure 2: Percentage of FOI requests replied to 'in time' by Departments of State and other monitored bodies by quarter from Q2 2012



⁵ Based on the mean.

3. Initial outcomes of requests [see Tables A5 & A6]

It may not be possible for a monitored body to resolve a request in full if the information sought is not held, further information is needed to be able to answer a request, or because a fee has been requested but not been paid. Of the 11,234 requests reported during Q3 of 2014 across all monitored bodies, 2,835 were not resolvable, as follows:

- 81 were 'on hold' awaiting a fee payment;
- 1,955 requests sought information that was not held;
- 799 were responded to with 'advice and assistance' because the body handling the request needed further information⁶ in order to identify the details being sought. If the requester provided appropriate information, the request is considered resolvable. Alternatively, if further information is needed to answer the request, and the requester has not provided any more detail, the public body will not be able to proceed with answering the request.

As a result, the remaining 8,399 (75%) 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.

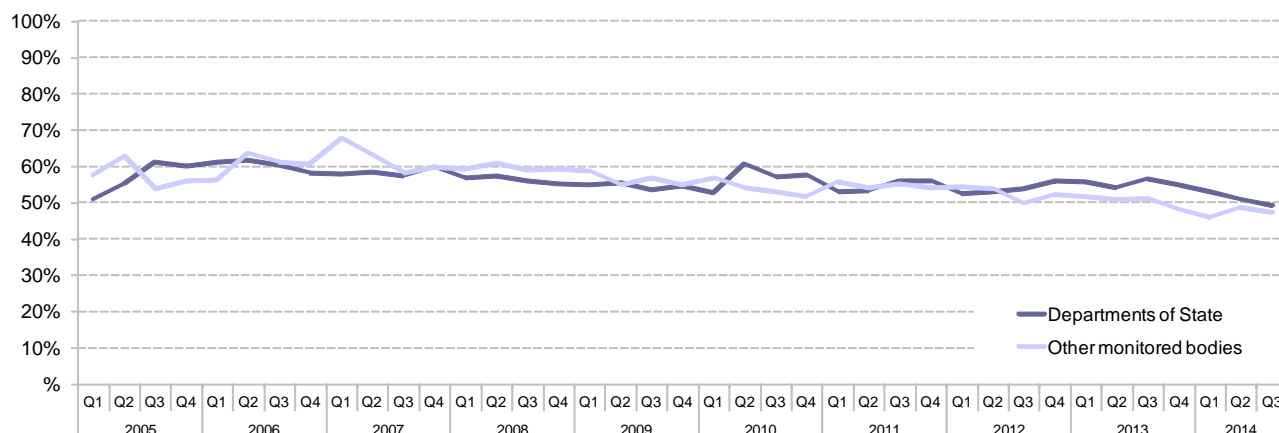
Of the 'resolvable' requests received during Q3 of 2014:

- 49% (4,089) were granted in full, down from 50% (4,307) in Q3 2013 and down from 55% (5,532) in Q2 2014;
- 32% (2,676) were withheld in full, up from 28% (2,868) in Q3 2013, and up from 31% (1,767) in Q2 of 2014;
- 14% (1,207) were withheld in part, up from 12% (1,235) in Q3 2013 and up from 13% (617) in Q2 2014;
- The remainder (5%, 427) had not been answered by the end of the quarter.

Figure 3 illustrates the outcome of resolvable requests since 2005. It shows that the proportion of requests granted in full has stayed fairly constant since the act was introduced; although a slight downward trend is starting to emerge. This may reflect a changing nature of requests as the monitored bodies have made more routine information available to the public.

⁶ Such as: to clarify unclear requests; to help to provide the information requested in an acceptable format; or when a request is transferred to another public authority

Figure 3: Percentage of resolvable requests granted in full, Q1 2005 – Q2 2014



4. Use of exemptions and exceptions [see Table A7]

Under the FoI Act, a public authority can only refuse to provide requested information that it holds if the request is considered vexatious or repeated, the cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit, or if the information falls in one or more of the categories of exempt information ('exemptions') listed in Part II of the Act⁷. Similar arrangements apply to certain types of information under the EIRs. Requests that have been exempted under Section 21 (information available by other means) are recorded separately in this bulletin.

Across all monitored bodies, a total of 2,618 requests (31% of resolvable requests) were reported as having one or more of these exemptions or exceptions applied to them during Q3 2014. This means that government holds the requested information, but has withheld some or all of it under an exemption listed in the Act.

The most commonly applied exemptions or exceptions in Q3 2014 were:

- Section 40 of the FOI Act (relating to personal information), which was applied to 1,197 requests, and in 46% of all exempt requests;
- Section 43 of the FOI Act (Commercial interests), which was applied to 223 requests, and in 9% of all exempt requests;
- Section 44 of the FOI Act (Prohibitions on disclosure), which was applied to 222 requests, and in 8% of all exempt requests;
- Section 31 of the FOI Act (Law enforcement), which was applied to 217 requests, and in 8% of all exempt requests;

⁷ A summary of all exemptions can be found at: www.justice.gov.uk/information-access-rights/FoI-guidance-for-practitioners/exemptions-guidance

- Section 22 of the FOI Act (Information intended for future publication), which was applied to 208 requests, and in 8% of all exempt requests.

These five exemptions are typically among the most frequent exemptions used since the FOI Act came into force. Use relative to one another varies however, for example, section 44 of the FOI Act rose from the 6th most frequently cited exemption in Q2 2014 with 7% of all exempt requests, to the 3rd most frequently used exemption in the third quarter.

5. Use of the Section 21 Exemption *[See table A8]*

A Section 21 exemption can be used under the FOI Act when information is reasonably available by other means⁸. Section 21 has been reported individually in this bulletin since Q1 2014; previous publications have excluded FOI requests exempt under Section 21 because the FOI Act is not designed to provide a new access route to information already available.

However, Section 21 is a legitimate part of the use of the FOI Act and those requests for which this exemption applies are still subject to the relevant handling timescales. Inclusion of these statistics in the bulletin presents a more accurate picture of the effort by the monitored bodies in relation to the Act.

Government has decided to report this exemption separately as Section 21s are difficult to classify by outcome: the request is refused but only because the information is already published. Including Section 21 requests within the other parts of this bulletin could artificially inflate both volume and timeliness figures since the requests are relatively straightforward to answer.

In the third quarter of 2014, there were 547 requests where a Section 21 exemption was applied⁹ either in full or in part. Whilst the Health and Safety Executive is unable to record timeliness of their 15 requests exempted under section 21, of the 532 remaining requests exempted under section 21, 93% received a response within the 20-day deadline. This is a decrease of 1 percentage point from the previous quarter.

⁸ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/21>

⁹ These only include requests where a Section 21 was the only exemption used.

Annex A: Statistical Tables

Latest quarterly (A1, A3, A5, A7, A8) and in-year (A2, A4, A6) tables

Table A1	<i>Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July – 30 September 2014, and their status at time of monitoring</i>
Table A2	<i>Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 July 2012</i>
Table A3	<i>Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July – 30 September 2014</i>
Table A4	<i>Proportion of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were answered 'in time', by quarter, since 1 July 2012</i>
Table A5	<i>Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July – 30 September 2014</i>
Table A6	<i>Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 July 2012</i>
Table A7	<i>Exemptions and exceptions applied by monitored bodies when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 July – 30 September 2014</i>
Table A8	<i>Section 21 exemptions applied by monitored bodies when dealing with routine information requests received from 1 July – 30 September 2014</i>

Symbols and conventions

- Not applicable
- 0 Nil
- * Percentage not supplied because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer (only applicable to pre 2014 publications).
- # Figures supplied by these Departments of State count non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well as those received by the departments themselves. Annex C gives full details
- † Government body changed during monitoring period. See Annex C

TABLE A1

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2014, and their status at time of monitoring

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring			Number handled under EIRs ²
		Processed	'On hold' or lapsed ¹	Still being processed	
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	11,234	10,726	81	427	487
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,406	7,114	0	292	261
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,828	3,612	81	135	226
<i>Departments of State</i>					
Attorney General's Office	53	53	0	0	0
Cabinet Office #	346	333	0	13	0
Communities and Local Government	210	206	0	4	39
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	251	243	0	8	4
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	109	107	0	2	11
Department for Education	370	367	0	3	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	196	174	0	22	94
Department for International Development	85	83	0	2	1
Department for Transport #	602	593	0	9	16
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,104	1,080	0	24	0
Department of Energy and Climate Change	141	135	0	6	91
Department of Health	451	450	0	1	0
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	271	233	0	38	1
HM Treasury #	325	287	0	38	0
Home Office #	736	679	0	57	0
Ministry of Defence #	781	731	0	50	4
Ministry of Justice #	1,234	1,222	0	12	0
Northern Ireland Office	40	40	0	0	0
Scotland Office	37	36	0	1	0
UK Export Finance ³	31	29	0	2	0
Wales Office	33	33	0	0	0

TABLE A1 continued

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2014 and their status at time of monitoring

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring			Number handled under EIRs ²
		Processed	'On hold' or lapsed ¹	Still being processed	
<i>Other bodies included in monitoring</i>					
Charity Commission	126	125	0	1	0
Competition and Markets Authority	32	32	0	0	0
Crown Prosecution Service	173	172	0	1	0
Debt Management Office	17	17	0	0	1
Food Standards Agency	38	38	0	0	1
Health and Safety Executive	1,243	1,223	0	20	81
HM Land Registry	87	87	0	0	0
HM Revenue and Customs	515	505	0	10	4
National Archives	783	606	81	96	0
National Savings and Investments	41	41	0	0	0
Office for National Statistics	71	70	0	1	0
Office for Standards in Education	159	159	0	0	0
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	115	113	0	2	28
Office of Rail Regulation	41	41	0	0	0
Ordnance Survey	25	25	0	0	0
Royal Mint	6	6	0	0	0
Rural Payments Agency	141	141	0	0	110
Serious Fraud Office	28	25	0	3	0
Treasury Solicitor's Department	99	99	0	0	0
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	88	87	0	1	1

Notes

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

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

3 - UK Export Finance is the operating name of the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

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

† - Government body changed during monitoring period. See Annex C of Bulletin.

TABLE A2

Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 July 2012

Government body	Number of non-routine information requests received								
	2012		2013				2014		
	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	11,563	12,159	13,712	12,667	13,370	12,140	13,664	11,689	11,234
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,646	8,251	9,312	8,536	9,145	8,400	9,178	7,811	7,406
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,917	3,908	4,400	4,131	4,225	3,740	4,486	3,878	3,828
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	21	43	53	64	78	64	57	41	53
Cabinet Office #	357	378	452	466	405	435	528	473	346
Communities and Local Government	241	193	247	212	208	175	197	171	210
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	247	232	227	238	298	234	301	230	251
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	128	122	136	134	138	124	137	152	109
Department for Education	332	315	476	454	390	439	518	443	370
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	147	170	176	170	243	237	318	214	196
Department for International Development	80	105	106	114	127	123	134	111	85
Department for Transport #	701	836	873	693	1,074	1,008	684	673	602
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,156	1,282	1,457	1,356	1,513	1,257	1,408	1,065	1,104
Department of Energy and Climate Change	147	197	168	154	207	212	240	153	141
Department of Health	430	483	567	524	514	398	469	490	451
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	279	332	285	338	293	309	369	275	271
HM Treasury #	713	679	779	689	642	522	467	449	325
Home Office #	973	1,110	1,129	884	893	768	872	741	736
Ministry of Defence #	817	853	940	816	904	903	1,022	856	781
Ministry of Justice #	757	781	1,083	1,103	1,038	1,068	1,308	1,133	1,234
Northern Ireland Office	49	53	56	41	60	46	60	58	40
Scotland Office	25	40	41	34	41	30	38	39	37
UK Export Finance	9	10	27	29	32	22	16	21	31
Wales Office	37	37	34	23	47	26	35	23	33

TABLE A2 continued

Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 July 2012

Government body	Number of non-routine information requests received								
	2012		2013				2014		
	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									
Charity Commission	146	127	173	151	158	142	167	156	126
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission †	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Competition and Markets Authority	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	32
Crown Prosecution Service	171	142	181	160	165	160	220	182	173
Debt Management Office	9	6	13	25	15	9	14	15	17
Food Standards Agency	25	34	98	44	40	35	53	41	38
Health and Safety Executive	1,617	1,641	1,657	1,447	1,417	1,246	1,378	1,246	1,243
HM Land Registry	55	88	98	133	93	72	100	96	87
HM Revenue and Customs	447	524	518	518	554	576	622	565	515
National Archives	720	643	864	861	902	713	909	830	783
National Savings and Investments	17	21	30	16	43	29	38	32	41
Office for National Statistics	67	71	73	61	84	48	82	65	71
Office for Standards in Education	140	162	166	172	186	209	309	184	159
Office of Fair Trading	92	105	96	85	87	83	69	-	-
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	52	64	56	67	74	94	97	90	115
Office of Rail Regulation	39	31	45	58	62	42	46	37	41
Ordnance Survey	23	17	15	16	35	20	13	11	25
Royal Mint	4	4	5	1	5	7	15	8	6
Rural Payments Agency	117	99	109	131	136	112	137	126	141
Serious Fraud Office	21	37	28	46	37	23	22	25	28
Treasury Solicitor's Department	133	66	141	85	56	69	110	94	99
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	22	26	34	54	76	51	85	55	88

Notes

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

† - Government body changed during monitoring period. See Annex C of Bulletin.

Note: The Competition and Markets Authority took over the functions of the Office of Fair Trading on 1st April 2014

TABLE A3

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2014

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	11,153	9,758	492	903	87%	92%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,406	6,369	321	716	86%	90%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,747	3,389	171	187	90%	95%
Departments of State						
Attorney General's Office	53	53	0	0	100%	100%
Cabinet Office #	346	307	19	20	89%	94%
Communities and Local Government	210	139	12	59	66%	72%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	251	219	22	10	87%	96%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	109	102	3	4	94%	96%
Department for Education	370	324	14	32	88%	91%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	196	106	16	74	54%	62%
Department for International Development	85	80	4	1	94%	99%
Department for Transport #	602	566	19	17	94%	97%
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,104	989	7	108	90%	90%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	141	114	17	10	81%	93%
Department of Health	451	442	9	0	98%	100%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	271	185	60	26	68%	90%
HM Treasury #	325	270	18	37	83%	89%
Home Office #	736	575	64	97	78%	87%
Ministry of Defence #	781	651	36	94	83%	88%
Ministry of Justice #	1,234	1,114	1	119	90%	90%
Northern Ireland Office	40	38	0	2	95%	95%
Scotland Office	37	34	0	3	92%	92%
UK Export Finance	31	28	0	3	90%	90%
Wales Office	33	33	0	0	100%	100%

TABLE A3 continued

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2014

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						
Charity Commission	126	117	0	9	93%	93%
Competition and Markets Authority	32	31	0	1	97%	97%
Crown Prosecution Service	173	160	3	10	92%	94%
Debt Management Office	17	17	0	0	100%	100%
Food Standards Agency	38	37	1	0	97%	100%
Health and Safety Executive	1,243	1,151	26	66	93%	95%
HM Land Registry	87	87	0	0	100%	100%
HM Revenue and Customs	515	462	0	53	90%	90%
National Archives ³	702	565	121	16	80%	98%
National Savings and Investments	41	41	0	0	100%	100%
Office for National Statistics	71	70	0	1	99%	99%
Office for Standards in Education	159	155	3	1	97%	99%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	115	97	6	12	84%	90%
Office of Rail Regulation	41	37	2	2	90%	95%
Ordnance Survey	25	24	0	1	96%	96%
Royal Mint	6	4	0	2	67%	67%
Rural Payments Agency	141	130	3	8	92%	94%
Serious Fraud Office	28	20	6	2	71%	93%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	99	97	0	2	98%	98%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	88	87	0	1	99%	99%

Notes

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

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

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

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

TABLE A4

Percentage of non-routine information requests received since 1 July 2012 that were answered 'in time', by quarter

Government body	Percentage of non-routine information requests that were answered 'in time' ¹								
	2012		2013				2014		
	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	92%	90%	89%	89%	92%	91%	92%	91%	92%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	90%	88%	87%	88%	91%	91%	91%	90%	90%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	95%	93%	93%	92%	93%	92%	94%	93%	95%
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	95%	98%	100%	97%	95%	97%	98%	90%	100%
Cabinet Office #	93%	95%	86%	83%	85%	86%	95%	90%	94%
Communities and Local Government	92%	91%	87%	92%	89%	82%	80%	82%	72%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	99%	96%	96%	99%	96%	98%	98%	97%	96%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	100%	100%	99%	97%	96%	95%	98%	96%	96%
Department for Education	74%	82%	89%	87%	87%	85%	87%	91%	91%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	93%	96%	89%	89%	100%	97%	99%	92%	62%
Department for International Development	98%	99%	99%	99%	98%	99%	98%	98%	99%
Department for Transport #	96%	95%	96%	96%	96%	97%	95%	96%	97%
Department for Work and Pensions #	83%	79%	92%	95%	94%	94%	92%	91%	90%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	96%	96%	97%	96%	99%	97%	98%	92%	93%
Department of Health	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	96%	93%	95%	88%	88%	82%	88%	93%	90%
HM Treasury #	99%	96%	98%	96%	96%	96%	93%	96%	89%
Home Office #	84%	72%	50%	53%	72%	81%	87%	84%	87%
Ministry of Defence #	86%	87%	84%	87%	89%	88%	85%	87%	88%
Ministry of Justice #	92%	90%	90%	88%	89%	87%	89%	83%	90%
Northern Ireland Office	96%	98%	96%	98%	97%	93%	88%	88%	95%
Scotland Office	100%	90%	95%	100%	98%	93%	92%	95%	92%
UK Export Finance	*	*	78%	66%	94%	77%	100%	90%	90%
Wales Office	59%	86%	100%	100%	100%	100%	97%	100%	100%

TABLE A4 continued

Percentage of non-routine information requests received since 1 July 2012 that were answered 'in time', by quarter

Government body	Percentage of non-routine information requests that were answered 'in time' ¹								
	2012		2013				2014		
	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									
Charity Commission	90%	96%	91%	96%	95%	94%	98%	95%	93%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission [†]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Competition and Markets Authority	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100%	97%
Crown Prosecution Service	90%	85%	77%	71%	64%	64%	95%	97%	94%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	100%	*	*	100%	100%	100%
Food Standards Agency	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%	100%	98%	98%	100%
Health and Safety Executive	95%	93%	91%	89%	92%	92%	91%	92%	95%
HM Land Registry	100%	98%	99%	98%	100%	100%	100%	98%	100%
HM Revenue and Customs	90%	90%	92%	90%	92%	89%	88%	86%	90%
National Archives ²	98%	98%	98%	99%	98%	98%	97%	97%	98%
National Savings and Investments	*	95%	97%	*	95%	93%	95%	97%	100%
Office for National Statistics	93%	80%	88%	77%	98%	96%	100%	100%	99%
Office for Standards in Education	97%	96%	96%	97%	97%	98%	97%	99%	99%
Office of Fair Trading	99%	92%	97%	96%	92%	89%	97%	-	-
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	92%	97%	88%	94%	86%	90%	88%	91%	90%
Office of Rail Regulation	95%	97%	96%	95%	95%	98%	98%	92%	95%
Ordnance Survey	100%	*	*	*	100%	*	100%	100%	96%
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	93%	100%	67%
Rural Payments Agency	100%	100%	99%	97%	94%	87%	100%	100%	94%
Serious Fraud Office	76%	76%	79%	80%	92%	96%	68%	72%	93%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	95%	100%	98%	98%	100%	99%	99%	99%	98%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	100%	69%	94%	96%	96%	96%	99%	100%	99%

Notes

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

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

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

† - Government body changed during monitoring period. See Annex C of Bulletin.

* - Percentage not supplied because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer.

Note: The Competition and Markets Authority took over the functions of the Office of Fair Trading on 1st April 2014

TABLE A5

Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2014

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	11,153	799	1,955	8,399	4,089	1,207	2,676	427	49%	32%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,406	502	1,239	5,665	2,794	691	1,888	292	49%	33%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,747	297	716	2,734	1,295	516	788	135	47%	29%
Departments of State										
Attorney General's Office	53	0	29	24	7	3	14	0	29%	58%
Cabinet Office #	346	69	82	195	56	24	102	13	29%	52%
Communities and Local Government	210	1	42	167	88	42	33	4	53%	20%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	251	9	61	181	57	41	75	8	31%	41%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	109	29	24	56	40	3	11	2	71%	20%
Department for Education	370	33	52	285	195	35	52	3	68%	18%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	196	16	48	132	64	23	23	22	48%	17%
Department for International Development	85	1	12	72	43	10	17	2	60%	24%
Department for Transport #	602	11	84	507	392	38	68	9	77%	13%
Department for Work and Pensions #	1,104	9	46	1,049	679	55	291	24	65%	28%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	141	4	22	115	44	25	40	6	38%	35%
Department of Health	451	24	107	320	62	83	174	1	19%	54%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	271	9	58	204	55	48	63	38	27%	31%
HM Treasury #	325	0	110	215	93	17	67	38	43%	31%
Home Office #	736	72	115	549	211	77	204	57	38%	37%
Ministry of Defence #	781	71	110	600	312	72	166	50	52%	28%
Ministry of Justice #	1,234	133	184	917	347	81	477	12	38%	52%
Northern Ireland Office	40	0	22	18	10	6	2	0	56%	11%
Scotland Office	37	10	10	17	15	0	1	1	88%	6%
UK Export Finance	31	0	1	30	18	5	5	2	60%	17%
Wales Office	33	1	20	12	6	3	3	0	50%	25%

TABLE A5 continued

Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 July - 30 September 2014

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										
Charity Commission	126	13	19	94	44	32	17	1	47%	18%
Competition and Markets Authority	32	7	4	21	10	5	6	0	48%	29%
Crown Prosecution Service	173	21	29	123	42	12	68	1	34%	55%
Debt Management Office	17	0	7	10	5	4	1	0	50%	10%
Food Standards Agency	38	3	4	31	21	6	4	0	68%	13%
Health and Safety Executive	1,243	61	383	799	413	191	175	20	52%	22%
HM Land Registry	87	1	7	79	59	17	3	0	75%	4%
HM Revenue and Customs	515	16	79	420	130	26	254	10	31%	60%
National Archives	702	60	66	576	260	106	114	96	45%	20%
National Savings and Investments	41	2	10	29	26	2	1	0	90%	3%
Office for National Statistics	71	0	22	49	40	1	7	1	82%	14%
Office for Standards in Education	159	31	12	116	35	21	60	0	30%	52%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	115	16	17	82	35	33	12	2	43%	15%
Office of Rail Regulation	41	9	7	25	12	11	2	0	48%	8%
Ordnance Survey	25	4	3	18	14	4	0	0	78%	0%
Royal Mint	6	0	0	6	1	1	4	0	17%	67%
Rural Payments Agency	141	46	8	87	44	16	27	0	51%	31%
Serious Fraud Office	28	5	1	22	8	6	5	3	36%	23%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	99	2	16	81	39	19	23	0	48%	28%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	88	0	22	66	57	3	5	1	86%	8%

Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TABLE A6

Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 July 2012¹

Government body	Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests that were granted in full								
	2012		2013				2014		
	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	53%	55%	55%	53%	55%	53%	51%	50%	49%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	54%	56%	56%	54%	56%	55%	53%	51%	49%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	50%	52%	52%	51%	51%	48%	46%	49%	47%
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	*	*	53%	*	36%	57%	73%	50%	29%
Cabinet Office #	29%	33%	23%	24%	25%	20%	21%	22%	29%
Communities and Local Government	62%	72%	61%	69%	63%	64%	65%	58%	53%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	46%	38%	43%	35%	37%	39%	34%	31%	31%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	62%	66%	44%	64%	68%	59%	58%	60%	71%
Department for Education	63%	63%	67%	65%	71%	67%	53%	59%	68%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	59%	76%	53%	69%	58%	58%	72%	68%	48%
Department for International Development	69%	74%	74%	58%	69%	60%	62%	60%	60%
Department for Transport #	75%	74%	75%	74%	78%	75%	76%	77%	77%
Department for Work and Pensions #	69%	68%	76%	71%	66%	69%	69%	65%	65%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	33%	41%	42%	37%	49%	55%	48%	44%	38%
Department of Health	46%	58%	57%	54%	59%	44%	58%	42%	19%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	34%	32%	23%	26%	29%	37%	26%	31%	27%
HM Treasury #	26%	46%	44%	46%	50%	41%	36%	54%	43%
Home Office #	47%	47%	37%	40%	42%	43%	42%	37%	38%
Ministry of Defence #	65%	60%	62%	64%	61%	63%	62%	52%	52%
Ministry of Justice #	38%	39%	38%	34%	39%	41%	34%	36%	38%
Northern Ireland Office	60%	59%	48%	*	74%	*	43%	40%	56%
Scotland Office	*	72%	70%	77%	86%	*	76%	74%	88%
UK Export Finance	*	*	56%	52%	79%	*	81%	50%	60%
Wales Office	42%	*	96%	95%	73%	*	81%	57%	50%

TABLE A6 continued

Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 July 2012¹

Government body	Percentage of resolvable non-routine information requests that were granted in full								
	2012		2013				2014		
	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									
Charity Commission	49%	49%	53%	45%	39%	50%	48%	45%	47%
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission †	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Competition and Markets Authority	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19%	48%
Crown Prosecution Service	46%	43%	46%	47%	46%	43%	35%	36%	34%
Debt Management Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	78%	69%	50%
Food Standards Agency	55%	48%	38%	39%	62%	33%	49%	67%	68%
Health and Safety Executive	49%	50%	48%	51%	50%	47%	44%	53%	52%
HM Land Registry	96%	95%	86%	91%	95%	86%	88%	67%	75%
HM Revenue and Customs	35%	36%	38%	29%	36%	37%	34%	27%	31%
National Archives	57%	68%	63%	56%	56%	51%	50%	59%	45%
National Savings and Investments	*	*	86%	*	95%	90%	100%	83%	90%
Office for National Statistics	83%	94%	92%	89%	87%	83%	78%	84%	82%
Office for Standards in Education	37%	40%	32%	30%	27%	25%	19%	22%	30%
Office of Fair Trading	29%	28%	32%	35%	30%	44%	67%	-	-
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	59%	79%	68%	81%	81%	75%	72%	59%	43%
Office of Rail Regulation	50%	*	50%	42%	28%	38%	41%	35%	48%
Ordnance Survey	*	*	*	*	67%	*	67%	60%	78%
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	46%	14%	17%
Rural Payments Agency	75%	56%	74%	78%	61%	61%	59%	68%	51%
Serious Fraud Office	*	50%	57%	31%	44%	*	37%	44%	36%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	43%	34%	32%	38%	50%	53%	49%	50%	48%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	*	59%	73%	86%	89%	80%	89%	68%	86%

Note

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

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

† - Government body changed during monitoring period. See Annex C of Bulletin.

* - Percentage not supplied because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer.

Note: The Competition and Markets Authority took over the functions of the Office of Fair Trading on 1st April 2014

TABLE A7

Exemptions and exceptions¹ applied by monitored bodies when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2014

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	1,479	1,139	2,618
Number of requests where each exemption (listed in Part II of FoI Act²) was applied			
S(21) - Information available by other means	-	-	-
S(22) - Information intended for future publication	182	26	208
S(23) - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters	69	29	98
S(24) - National security	39	5	44
S(26) - Defence	16	4	20
S(27) - International relations	60	10	70
S(28) - Relations within the United Kingdom	0	0	0
S(29) - The economy	19	0	19
S(30) - Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities	14	169	183
S(31) - Law enforcement	111	106	217
S(32) - Court records, etc.	41	14	55
S(33) - Audit functions	2	5	7
S(34) - Parliamentary privilege	0	0	0
S(35) - Formulation of Government policy, etc.	121	5	126
S(36) - Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs	104	6	110
S(37) - Communications with Her Majesty, etc. and honours	9	1	10
S(38) - Health and Safety	15	16	31
S(39) - Environmental information	- ³	- ³	- ³
S(40) - Personal information	654	543	1,197
S(41) - Information provided in confidence	67	67	134
S(42) - Legal professional privilege	37	19	56
S(43) - Commercial interests	189	34	223
S(44) - Prohibitions on disclosure	36	186	222
Number of requests where each exception (listed in Part 3 of EIRs) was applied			
3(a) - Exempt personal data	41	46	87
4(a) - Information not available	7	1	8
4(b) - Manifestly unreasonable	26	9	35
4(c) - Too general	1	1	2
4(d) - Work in progress / incomplete data	19	1	20
4(e) - Internal communications	23	9	32
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	6	0	6
5(c) - Adverse effect on intellectual property rights	0	0	0
5(d) - Impinges on confidentiality of a public authority's work	3	12	15
5(e) - Impinges on confidentiality of commercial or industrial information	9	3	12
5(f) - Adverse effect on interests of person who provided the information	2	0	2
5(g) - Adverse effect on protection of environment to which information relates	0	0	0
Environmental Exceptions	142	82	224

Notes

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

2 - The exemption described in section 21 of the Act ('Information accessible ... by other means') is not listed here, because requests falling under this exemption do not meet the formal definition of a 'non-routine' request and therefore are not counted in these monitoring statistics. Figures for Section 21 exemptions can be found in Table A8

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 A8

Section 21 exemptions¹ applied by monitored bodies when dealing with routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2014

Government body	Number of requests where a Section 21 exemption was applied	Timeliness of response		Percentage of requests meeting 20-day deadline
		20-day deadline met	Late response (i.e. 20-day deadline missed)	
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	547	497	35	93%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	436	405	31	93%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	111	92	4	96%
Departments of State				
Attorney General's Office	0	0	0	-
Cabinet Office #	37	30	7	81%
Communities and Local Government	11	9	2	82%
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills	9	9	0	100%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	5	5	0	100%
Department for Education	14	14	0	100%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	2	2	0	100%
Department for International Development	2	2	0	100%
Department for Transport #	29	28	1	97%
Department for Work and Pensions #	21	19	2	90%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	11	11	0	100%
Department of Health	73	72	1	99%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	7	6	1	86%
HM Treasury #	52	51	1	98%
Home Office #	66	61	5	92%
Ministry of Defence #	23	23	0	100%
Ministry of Justice #	71	60	11	85%
Northern Ireland Office	1	1	0	100%
Scotland Office	0	0	0	-
UK Export Finance	0	0	0	-
Wales Office	2	2	0	100%

TABLE A8 Continued

Section 21 exemptions applied by monitored bodies when dealing with routine information requests received from 1 July - 30 September 2014

Government body	Number of requests where a Section 21 exemption was applied	Timeliness of response		Percentage of requests meeting 20-day deadline
		20-day deadline met	Late response (i.e. 20-day deadline missed)	
Other bodies included in monitoring				
Charity Commission	1	1	0	100%
Competition and Markets Authority	5	5	0	100%
Crown Prosecution Service	1	1	0	100%
Debt Management Office	0	0	0	-
Food Standards Agency	0	0	0	-
Health and Safety Executive ²	15	-	-	-
HM Land Registry	12	12	0	100%
HM Revenue and Customs	35	31	4	89%
National Archives	1	1	0	100%
National Savings and Investments	3	3	0	100%
Office for National Statistics	8	8	0	100%
Office for Standards in Education	3	3	0	100%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	0	0	0	-
Office of Rail Regulation	1	1	0	100%
Ordnance Survey	0	0	0	-
Royal Mint	0	0	0	-
Rural Payments Agency	1	1	0	100%
Serious Fraud Office	0	0	0	-
Treasury Solicitor's Department	25	25	0	100%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	0	0	0	-

Notes

1 - A section 21 exemption is defined as information available by other means.

2 - The HSE was unable to provide timeliness data for Section 21 exemptions. Therefore, timeliness figures may not sum.

3 - These tables cover requests that were exempted either fully or in part under Section 21, where a Section 21 was the only exemption used

4 - Section 21 is an absolute exemption, which means that no consideration of the public interest test is required to withhold information.

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

Annex B: 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 FOI Publication Schemes. All information released on request is covered by the Freedom of Information Act. However, it would be both uninformative and fundamentally unfeasible to count all such activity in departmental Freedom of Information monitoring returns.

The statistics in this bulletin therefore relate to all ‘non-routine’ information requests that government departments have received, and those routine information requests that are handled under Section 21. 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 handling of information requests.

Because 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:

- (i) These statistics cover both 'non-routine' information requests, and 'routine' information requests which are answered under a Section 21 exemption. This does 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.

Users 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 and individuals with an interest in the accessibility of government information. The statistics are used to monitor the implementation of the FOI Act by central government, both as a whole and by each individual body included in the figures.

Annex C: Government bodies included in these statistics

The statistics in this bulletin have been derived from monitoring returns completed by Freedom of Information officers in government departments during November and December 2014. This is the latest set of quarterly Freedom of Information statistics to be published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the government department that 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 41 government bodies, including all major Departments of State (i.e. ministerial departments).

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

Coverage within the UK

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

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

The following is a full list of the bodies covered by the monitoring statistics in the third quarter of 2014.

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
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
HM Treasury
Home Office
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Justice
Northern Ireland Office
Scotland Office
UK Export Finance
Wales Office

Other monitored bodies

Charity Commission
Competition and Markets Authority
Crown Prosecution Service
Debt Management Office
Food Standards Agency
Health and Safety Executive
HM Land Registry
HM Revenue and Customs
National Archives
National Savings and Investments
Office for National Statistics
Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)
Office of 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 2012 and the end of September 2014 – the period covered by the tables in this bulletin:

As of 1st April 2014, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) closed. It transferred the majority of its functions and responsibilities to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). The CMA's FoI statistics are now collected instead.

2. The figures provided by a number of Departments of State count requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. The departments and agencies affected are shown below.

Cabinet Office

Figures include requests received by the following:

Requests that were addressed to 10 Downing Street

Central Office of Information

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

Met Office

Department for Education

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

Standards and Testing Agency
Education Funding Agency
Teaching Agency
National College for School Leadership

Department for Transport

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

Driving Standards Agency
Driver and Vehicle Licensing 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:

- Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission
- Disability and Carers' Service
- Jobcentre plus
- Pension Service

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. From 1 April 2011, the National Fraud Authority was included in requests supplied by the Home Office.

Ministry of Defence

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

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

Ministry of Justice

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

Annex D: Explanatory notes

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

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

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

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

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

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

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

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

<https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/the-freedom-of-information-act>

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 the Gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-Folaeirs>

These statistics are derived from monitoring returns submitted to MoJ in July and August 2014. They relate to information requests received during the period 1 April to 30 June 2014. Thanks are due to FOI officers for their work in preparing these returns. The collection of monitoring data began on the 21st working day after the last day of this period (i.e. on 29th July 2014), since 20 working days is the statutory deadline for public authorities to respond to information requests under both the FOI Act and the EIRs.

Both 'non-routine' information requests and 'routine' information requests (that are covered under Section 21) are counted in these statistics. Important notes on the scope and consistency of these statistics are given in Annex B.

These statistics cover 41 central government bodies. At the commencement of the Act in January 2005, there were 43 bodies covered by the monitoring statistics, but the precise number can change from time to time due to 'Machinery of Government' changes. A full list of the monitored bodies in Q2 2014 is shown in Annex C.

Contacts

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

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

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Other enquiries about these statistics should be directed to:

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Ministry of Justice
7th Floor, 102 Petty France
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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
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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

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