

FOI/14/49

Title: Amount of money spent on the purchase of flags and associated costs

Response to an FOI requesting information about the amount of money spent on the purchase of flags and associated costs

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/49 dated April 2014

FOI/14/50

Title: Broadcasting Act 1987

Response to an FOI requesting information about the Broadcasting Act 1987.

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/50 dated March 2014

FOI/14/51

Title: Contract information relating to insurance services

Response to an FOI requesting information about contract information relating to insurance services.

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/51 dated March 2014

FOI/14/52

Title: Total number of laptops owned by department

Response to an FOI requesting information about the total number of laptops owned by department.

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/52 dated March 2014

FOI/14/53

Title: How many allegations of sexual harassment between 2010 - 2013

Response to an FOI requesting to know how many allegations of sexual harassment between 2010 - 2013

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/53 dated March 2014

FOI/14/54

Title: Amount of money spent on providing access to airport lounges or rest areas

Response to an FOI requesting information on the amount of money spent on providing access to airport lounges or rest areas

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/54 dated March 2014

FOI/14/55

Title: All unpaid and incomplete or unsuccessful electronic payment attempts

Response to an FOI requesting information about all unpaid and incomplete or unsuccessful electronic payment attempts

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/55 dated March 2014

FOI/14/59

Title: Have any staff been found to not have the necessary qualifications to work in UK

Response to an FOI requesting to know if any staff have been found to not have the necessary qualifications to work in UK

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/59 dated March 2014

FOI/14/60

Title: Copies of internal FOI policies, process and procedures

Response to an FOI requesting information on and copies of internal FOI policies, process and procedures

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/60 dated April 2014

FOI/14/61

Title: Flexible working for employees

Response to an FOI requesting information about flexible working for employees

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/61 dated April 2014

FOI/14/64

Title: Annual spend on hiring and purchasing

Response to an FOI requesting information about annual spend on hiring and purchasing

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/64 dated April 2014

FOI/14/68

Title: Terrorist attacks aimed at public authorities

Response to an FOI requesting information about terrorist attacks aimed at public authorities

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/68 dated April 2014

FOI/14/73

Title: Firearms appeals

Response to an FOI requesting information about firearms appeals

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/73 dated May 2014

FOI/14/75

Title: How many calls have been made to the speaking clock?

Response to an FOI requesting information the number of calls made to the speaking clock

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/75 dated April 2014

FOI/14/76

Title: How much money has been spent on apps for staff smartphones and tablets

Response to an FOI requesting information about the amount of money spent on apps for staff smartphones and tablets

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/76 dated April 2014

FOI/14/79

Title: copies of political, economic or defence assessments provided to SoS in respect of 1990 speech

Response to an FOI requesting copies of political, economic or defence assessments provided to SoS in respect of 1990 speech

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/79 dated May 2014

FOI/14/83

Title: annual resource accounts

Response to an FOI requesting information about the annual resource accounts

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/83 dated May 2014

FOI/14/84

Title: number of e petitions rejected since e petition website was established

Response to an FOI requesting information about the number of e petitions rejected since e petition website was established

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/84 dated May 2014

FOI/14/85

Title: Number of unauthorised incidents or breaches

Response to an FOI requesting information about the number of unauthorised incidents or breaches

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/85 dated April 2014

FOI/14/86

Title: copy of 'The way ahead' report

Response to an FOI requesting a copy of 'The way ahead' report

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/86 dated May 2014

FOI/14/87

Title: number of attempts to access recruitment websites

Response to an FOI requesting information about the number of attempts to access

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/87 dated May 2014

FOI/14/88

Title: How many contracts have been awarded to Serco

Response to an FOI requesting information

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/88 dated May 2014

FOI/14/89

Title: Procurement policy note information

Response to an FOI requesting information on

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/89 dated May 2014

FOI/14/91

Title: Total spend on NIO recruitment

Response to an FOI requesting information

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/91 dated May 2014

FOI/14/92

Title: Amount spent on IT systems

Response to an FOI requesting information

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/92 dated June 2014

FOI/14/94

Title: compensation claims made by staff in 2013

Response to an FOI requesting information about any compensation claims made by staff in 2013

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/94 dated May 2014

FOI/14/95

Title: minutes from 1981 meetings that discussed the murder of Rev Robert Bradford MP

Response to an FOI requesting a copy of any minutes from 1981 meetings that discussed the murder of Rev Robert Bradford MP

Detail: Reply to Freedom of Information request 14/95 dated June 2014



Northern Ireland Office
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1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Telephone 0207 210 0840
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Freedom of Information Team

April 2014

REFERENCE: 14/49

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office:

Using records held centrally can you please let me know how much money has been spent by The Northern Ireland Office on the purchase of flags and any associated costs of flying those flags in each of the past 5 years

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Northern Ireland Office has spent £217.38 on the purchase of 2 Lord Lieutenants flags over the last 5 years. A Lord Lieutenant flag is flown when a citizenship ceremony is taking place at Hillsborough Castle.





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Freedom of Information Team

March 2014

REFERENCE: 14/50

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office:

I hope you can help me with my request. I am currently undertaking academic research into the Broadcasting Act 1987.

I am unable to find the transcript of the Act itself, or the content of the notices issued to the BBC and IBA by the then Secretary of State for the Home Department Douglas Hurd.

The issues in question are outlined in the transcripts below from the House of Commons, on the 19th October 1988:

<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1988/oct/19/broadcasting-and-terrorism#1988-10-19T15:45:00Z>

I would also like to request information on the other aspect of this legislation which relates to the suspension of the right to silence of those suspected of terrorist activities. I believe that this was introduced through the Home Office at the same time as the notices to the IBA and BBC were issued. Unfortunately, as I have been unable to find any more information on this I cannot provide further details at this point.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I can confirm that the Department does not hold any information falling within the scope of your request.

You may wish to note that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) are responsible for broadcasting so you may wish to submit a request directly to them. I have provided the following link to the DCMS website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-culture-media-sport>

You may also wish to approach the Home Office for information relating to the suspension of the right to silence as they may hold information that you are interested in. I have provided the following link to the Home Office website: **<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office>**





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March 2014

REFERENCE: FOI – 14/51

You requested the following information:

Contract information relating to insurance services which include the following:

- 1. Motor**
- 2. Property**
- 3. Accident and Liability**

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I can confirm the Northern Ireland Office does not have any contracts for insurance services for motor, property or accident and liability.



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Freedom of Information Team

March 2014

REFERENCE: FOI – 14/52

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO):

Could you please provide me with the total number of laptops owned by your organisation that were registered to and/or in the possession of staff members (whether directly employed by your organisation or otherwise) on the following two dates:

- a) 1 May 2010 (or nearest available date – please specify), and**
- b) 1 May 2013 (or nearest available date – please specify).**

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

On 1 May 2010 the NIO owned four laptops and on 1 May 2013, ten.



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March 2014

REFERENCE: FOI – 14/53

You requested the following information:

Please can you state how many allegations of sexual harassment the department has received in 2013, 2012, 2011 and 2010. Additionally for each allegation I would like a break down of the genders of both the complainant and the focus of the complaint. What are the department's reporting procedures for the alleged victims sexual harassment?

Your request has been handled under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) received no allegations of sexual harassment between 2010 and 2013.

The NIO follows the Ministry of Justice's (MOJ) terms and conditions, including policies. The MOJ's Sexual assault policy and guidance sets out the reporting procedures for staff in the event they consider they have been a victim of sexual harassment. In the first instance staff are advised to report this to their line manager or if they prefer an alternative manager or an HR advisor. The policy is available to staff via the intranet and provides details of workplace place support, staff and women's issues networks all of whom a member of staff can speak to regarding any form of sexual harassment.



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March 2014

REFERENCE: FOI - 14/54

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO):

How much has your department spent on providing access to 1) airport lounges and rest areas and 2) train station lounges and rest areas for a) Ministers of elected representatives of the department b) staff allocated to or representing the department and c) political appointments, including special advisors, to the department in the financial years since May 2010.

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The table below sets out the expenditure on airport lounge and rest areas

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Ministers	NIL	£143.70	£406.18
NIO staff/representatives	NIL	NIL	NIL
Political appointments	NIL	NIL	NIL

The information provided is based on occurrences where lounge access was provided as an additional requirement to flights. Some flights include lounge access as part of the package and it is not possible to separate this component from the cost of the flight.

The Department has not incurred any expenditure on train station lounges and rest areas in the financial years since May 2010.



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Freedom of Information Team

April 2014

REFERENCE: FOI - 14/55

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO);

I should like to request the following information for Northern Ireland Office:

1. All unpaid open/uncashed/unreconciled cheques /warrants /vouchers, and incomplete or unsuccessful electronic payment attempts (such as bank/wire transfer, etc.) made by Northern Ireland Office in payment to others. I am specifically interested in records that meet the following criteria:

- a) The outstanding obligation is for an amount greater than £9,500;**
- b) The obligation has been outstanding for a period of 6 months or longer; and**
- c) The payee retains the rights to claim the funds (i.e.the obligation of Northern Ireland Office to the payee remains).**

I should prefer to receive these in electronic format (.xls, .csv, etc.) at this email address, however, I am happy to receive them by post if that is more convenient.

It would be helpful if you were to provide any brief notes which might be necessary to understand the context of the information provided, although I recognise that you are not obliged to do this. If for any reason you feel this request is unclear, please do not hesitate to contact me at +1.972.867.8670. If you are not the appropriate authority for this request, or for part of it, please let me know as soon as is convenient.

If the information requested contains sections of confidential information, please blank out or remove these sections, and mark clearly that they have been removed.

Which you further clarified on request to;

- 1. restrict time period from 2008 to 2013**
- 2. restrict the research for our inquiry to use of electronic / computer search (i.e.spreadsheet)**



Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

As you may be aware, the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly took place on 12 April 2010. The following information therefore relates to the period from 12 April 2010 onwards:

- The Northern Ireland Office operates a payment system that is reconciled on a weekly basis. The account is checked daily, and any payments that have been unsuccessful are dealt with immediately.
- From 10 June 2013 all payments to suppliers have been made by BACS, and cheques are no longer used as a method of payment.
- There are no outstanding obligations for more than £9,500, or that have been outstanding for a period longer than 6 months.





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March 2014

REFERENCE: FOI – 14/59

You requested the following information:

Please confirm whether, in the past three years:

- 1) Any people working for the department have been found not to have the necessary qualifications to work in the UK, for example indefinite leave to remain, or having an invalid visa.**
- 2) If so, please confirm in each case the capacity in which the worker was employed/used by the department, and what action was taken.**

Your request has been handled under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

In the last three years, no one working for the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) has been found to not have the necessary qualifications to work in the UK.



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Freedom of Information Team

April 2014

REFERENCE: 14/60

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO):

This is a Freedom of Information Act request about the information management systems in your department. Please provide me with a copy of your department's guidance to processing freedom of information requests – ideally this would cover the end to end process from receipt to closure, but please provide whatever you hold. Please note that I am not looking for any ICO or MoJ guidance which may be available publically, I am specifically interested in Northern Ireland Office produced internal guidance including policy, process and procedures.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I can confirm that the department holds information falling within the scope of your request.

The NIO uses a variety of sources of information as internal guidance when handling requests for information and appeals under the FOIA.

The NIO considers policy advice, good practice and working assumptions published by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) when handling individual requests for information. The ICO publishes guidance on the FOIA so that public authorities can better understand their legal obligations and to communicate key changes in legislation. In addition the MOJ, which holds policy responsibility for the FOIA, publishes guidance on the FOIA to assist practitioners. Published information is used as a guidance tool to aid all NIO staff who are considering requests under the FOIA.

In regards to in-house guidance, the Department has implemented an Information Management Freedom of Information Policy. This policy forms a framework in which all internal guidance is assessed, reviewed and routinely issued to all staff. I have attached a copy of the Freedom of Information Policy for information.



I have also attached general FOIA guidance and a request handling flowchart that are available to all staff to access via our internal intranet pages.





Northern
Ireland
Office

Information Management Freedom of Information (FOI) Policy

Version - 2.3

Status – Final



IS Division

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1. Background

1.1 The NIO Management Board in April 2007 asked that a policy be drawn up to highlight and improve governance arrangements around the handling of Freedom of Information (FoI) cases in the NIO. Handling and management procedures have been reviewed and a more explicit monitoring system developed, with clearer roles, responsibilities and escalation procedures. The first version of this policy was issued in May 2007. The policy was endorsed by Departmental Board members out of committee.

1.2 A review of this policy was initiated in November 2007, after it had been in operation for six months, to see if it could be enhanced in light of experience. The current version represents the outcome of that review.

2. Compliance Requirements

2.1 Section 10 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 states that when in receipt of a request for information from a member of the public, "a public authority must comply 'promptly and in any event not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt'". This can be extended only in cases where exemptions are being considered. The escalation trigger points outlined in section 4 of this policy are derived directly from these requirements.

2.2 One of the issues for the department is where the normal response path cannot be followed due to further work being required. In this instance further work usually involves clarification of the request or the application of exemptions, either absolute or qualified. For qualified exemptions an additional 'reasonable' period is permitted to provide a response. Although no fixed period is specified for this in the Act, where qualified exemptions are being considered, it is considered reasonable that a target of six weeks (the same as specified in the complaints procedure of the Act) is used with provision for it to be added to the 20 day response time above when required.

Overall Response Management Policy

3. Allocation and Acceptance

3.1 It is vital that clear ownership is identified at the beginning of the process, if delays are to be avoided later. Therefore, the policy is to allocate and gain acceptance from a clear owner (the 'FoI Request Owner') when an FoI request is received and logged. The Information Management Centre will allocate the FoI request on the same day as receipt and this will form part of the 'logging process'. It is proposed that where there is confusion or dispute about the allocation of a request to a Division or body, the arbitration role goes immediately to the Director of Resources.

3.2 It is recognised that in some cases, we may need to seek immediate clarification of the request from the applicant, and that some time may elapse before this is received. In such cases, the first monitoring point is timed from the acceptance and allocation of the FoI request into the response process *after* clarification has been obtained.

3.3 Where a request requires more than one Division or body to respond it is essential that a single FoI Request Owner is still agreed to take the lead on the request, and ownership of responsibility for getting a response drafted within the prescribed timescales.

3.4 Experience shows that some types of case are especially vulnerable to problems and delays. For example: those involving a wide range of stakeholders (especially if some are external to the Department); those which have to be referred to the Ministry of Justice; and those where legal advice has to be sought. IMC will try to identify such cases at the earliest opportunity and ensure they are particularly closely monitored, and drawn to the attention of senior management when appropriate.

4. Monitoring Points and Escalation

4.1 After allocation and distribution to the FoI Request Owner the first reminder will be triggered 10 days from receipt of the request. This is calculated to give the Department enough time to comply with the Act, providing the FoI Request Owner provides the necessary information to the FoI team promptly. The reminder will take the form of a formal letter to the FoI Request Owner giving details and asking for the request to be expedited urgently, or the reasons clearly stated why they feel this is not possible. The formal 10 day reminder will be sent by the Departmental Records Officer (DRO) in the Information Management Centre and copied to the Head of Division, ISD and the Head of Division responsible for the response.

4.2 The second and final reminder will be triggered 18 days from receipt and is considered a 'red flag' notification as it highlights that only the promptest action will prevent the department being in breach of compliance and is at risk of adverse publicity or enforcement action by the Information Commissioner. This will take the form of formal letter to the FoI Request Owner, giving details of previous reminders and asking for the request to be expedited immediately or the reasons for non-compliance stated. The formal 18 day reminder will be sent by the Head of Division, ISD, and copied to the Director of Resources, the relevant Director directly responsible for the response and the Permanent Secretary, highlighting the risk to the department.

4.3 Should a case reach the 20-day deadline without an authorized extension, the Head of IS Division will escalate it to the Director of Resources, who will contact the relevant Director and the Permanent Secretary, highlighting the risk to the Department. This letter will give notice that the

Department is now in breach of the Act, and unless immediate action is taken, the case will be reported to the NIO Board as part of the FOI reporting process.

5. Exemptions

5.1 In cases where an exemption is being considered response times are not explicitly stated in the Act. However, the times for the complaints procedure are given and seem equally appropriate to apply as reasonable here i.e. two to three weeks for consultation and six weeks to apply exemptions either absolute or qualified. *For consideration of exemptions within the NIO the consultation period will form part of the overall exemption period and not be considered as additional time – i.e. a total of six weeks overall.*

5.2 This is not to say that, if exemptions are being considered, Divisions should assume that they have six weeks to deal with the case – all possible effort should still be made to issue a response as soon as possible. Reaching the position of applying an absolute exemption should be achieved quickly. It is recognised that the 'qualified exemptions' require greater judgement and expertise and this is one of the more difficult aspects of compliance with the Act. Therefore the reasons for cases exceeding the six week period will be reviewed individually and reported.

5.3 Except in the most exceptional circumstances, where a further extension may be agreed with the Director of Resources, all cases which exceed their agreed target date will be reported directly to the NIO Board. This means after twenty working days for cases where no exemptions apply, and after six weeks for cases where exemptions are being considered.

5.4 To facilitate and expedite decisions where a high level of expertise is required, ISD has built up a broad base of expertise in both Belfast and London, including liaison and coordination with other experts in cases of joint working or common issues e.g. NIPS, OFMDFM etc.

5.5 In the past, there have been cases where explicit advice has been given on the application of exemptions, either directly by IMC or indirectly from outside experts, and the FoI Request Owner has decided not to accept this advice. The FoI Request Owner is entitled to do this but, recognising that this represents a risk to the Department, such cases will be flagged in reports to the NIO Board.

6. Other Party Notifications

6.1 When releasing information to an applicant, where the responsible Division believes that other parties, will be directly affected by that release, the Division should identify them to the FoI Team and request that a notification be issued to those other parties.

6.2 For example where the release includes information which is likely to be sensitive politically or could generate substantial press interest etc, the Division may wish to notify those other parties in advance of release, so they have some prior warning. The FoI team is happy to do this. However, as they could not be aware either of which information may prove to be sensitive, or of which parties might be affected (unless these had already been identified during the handling of the case) the onus must lie on Divisions to alert the FoI team, and to supply draft notifications, at least five days in advance of the release date to allow prior notification to take place. Only the notification letter(s) with the topic highlighted and no other information should be issued with a prior warning of imminent information release under FoI. The preparation and issue of prior notification letters to other parties affected by the release of information under an FoI request should not affect statutory deadlines.

6.3 In all cases, the Division and the FoI Team will consult on whether NIIS, SPADs and the Private Offices should also be notified. As the onus will lie with the Division to identify and draw these cases to attention, the allocation letter (see section 3 above) will draw this to the Divisions' attention by including a standard sentence stating that consideration should be given to releases of information which are likely to affect other parties and may be politically sensitive or generate press interest. All escalation letters will also carry the standard sentence as a reminder.

7. Internal Reviews

7.1 Under the FoI Act, if an applicant is unhappy with the response to their original request, they have the right to request an internal review of the decision within two months of the issuing of the response letter.

7.2 The FoI Team will arrange for a panel to sit within 2 weeks of the receipt of the letter from the applicant requesting an internal review. The size of panel may vary, depending on the scale and complexity of the case, but must comprise at least two members. Panel members may come from different grades, depending on the nature of the material to be considered, but will normally come from the range B1 - Grade 5. Ideally, panel members should have played no part in the processing of the original request.

7.3 A representative of the Division which took the lead on the original case may attend the review meeting, to provide background information and

answer any questions the panel may have, but this representative will take no part in the decision making process. A representative of IMC will attend all internal reviews, to give the panel independent advice on procedure, the application of exemptions, and relevant earlier decisions by the Information Commissioner and Information Tribunal. It is not the IMC representative's role to lobby for or against the release of information, but again if the panel rejects specific advice from the IMC representative, this introduces a potential risk to the Department, and this will be flagged in reports to the NIO Board.

7.4 When the panel has reached a decision, the IMC representative will complete the form 'FoI Request Internal Review', ensuring that all actions are assigned to named individuals and given reasonable target dates. If these target dates extend more than 4 weeks after the panel has sat, the reasons must also be recorded on the form. A summary of all review panel decisions will be included in ISD FoI reports to the NIO Board, highlighting any which are likely a) to lead to adverse publicity for the department, b) to be referred to the Information Commissioner, or c) which have target dates which extend more than 4 weeks after the panel has sat.

7.5 One week before the target date, the DRO will write to the lead Division, requesting a progress update. If it is apparent that the target date will be missed, the DRO will escalate the case to the Director of Resources, who will write to the Head of Division, highlighting the risk to the Department and requesting an explanation and a new target date. This letter will be copied to the relevant Director and to the Permanent Secretary. If the Director of Resources is not satisfied with the response from the Head of Division, or the new target date is missed, the case will be specifically highlighted in the NIO Board reports to the NIO Board for action.

8. Monitoring and Statistics

8.1 For all of the above IS Division has appointed a Monitoring Officer to examine the FoI log and ensure that performance against targets, and all escalations, are recorded as part of the management process, and that all escalation processes are followed.

8.2 A monthly metrics report charting the position of all FoI issues is maintained and used for reports. This will include sections summarizing: current, 'live' cases, highlighting those which are overdue; the Department's handling of FoI cases for the year to date; internal reviews; and cases which have been appealed to the ICO.

8.3 In addition, FoI metrics and issues are included in ISD's divisional reports to the NIO Board on a quarterly basis.

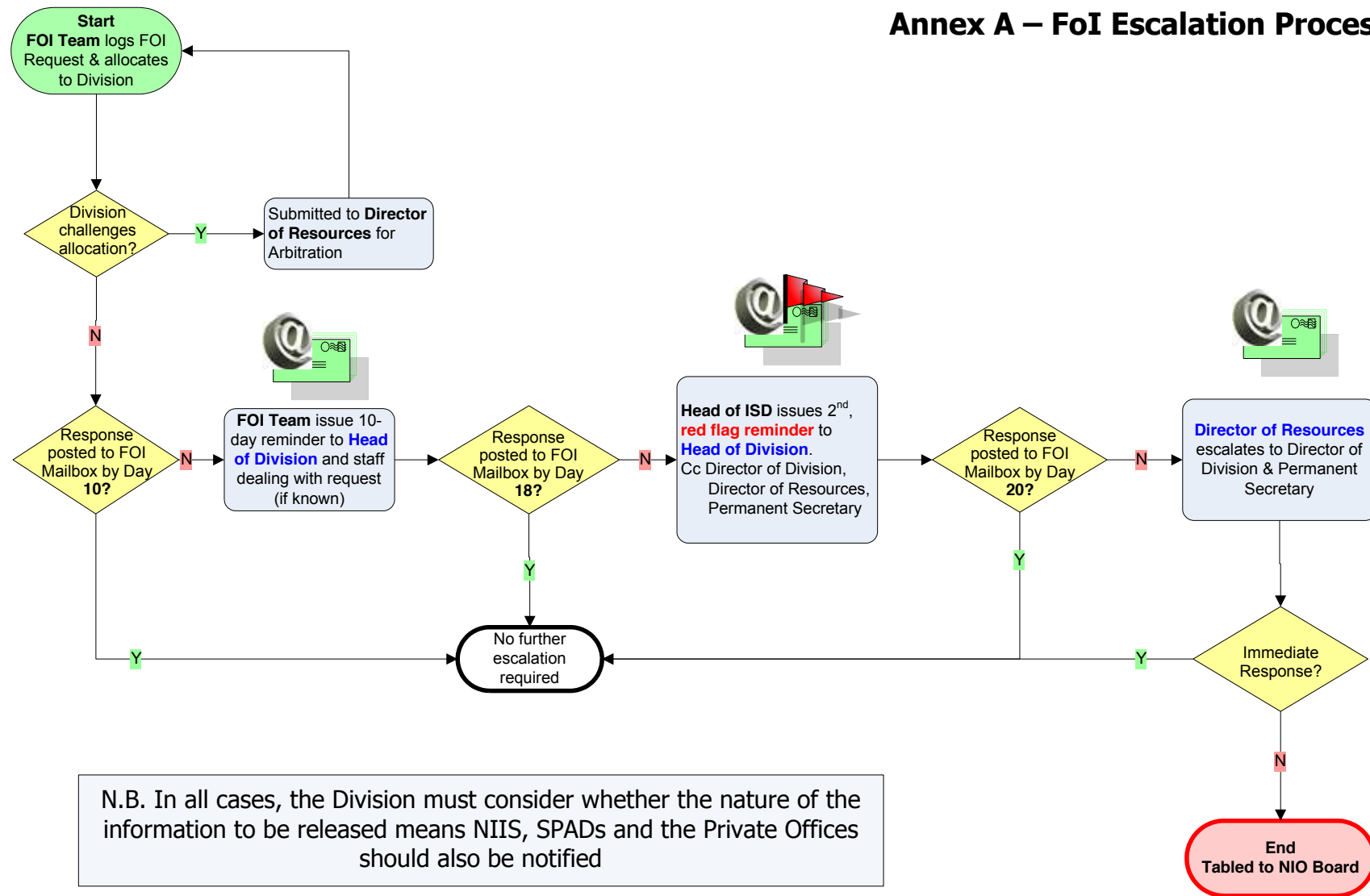
Awareness, Education and Communication

9. Awareness, Education and Communication

9.1 In the light of this policy, Directors and Heads of Division will wish to consider how FoI requests are processed within their Directorates and Divisions, and review these arrangements. It is vital that staff at Grade A and Grade 5 participate in internal review and appeal panels, whose work is essential to meeting our statutory obligations.

9.2 The Head of Information Management (who is also the DRO) will coordinate measures to maintain awareness of FoI issues across the Department, including an annual presentation to the NIO Board and to each Directorate management team. All awareness measures will highlight the role of the Departmental Records Officer (DRO) in general for advice and guidance. Finally, up to date guidance will be maintained on the FoI section of NIONet.

Annex A – FoI Escalation Process Map



PANEL MEMBER'S GUIDE TO INTERNAL REVIEW PANELS

1. Applicants' Right of Appeal

1.1 The FoI Act requires an authority to hold an internal review if an applicant is unsatisfied with the response to their initial request. The complaint can be because they are unhappy with the way the request was handled, with the explanation of why information was not released, or because the applicant believes the wrong FoI exemptions were applied. Applicants are advised of this right in our letter of response to their initial request, and advised to make their complaint in writing to the FoI Team. On receipt of a complaint, the FoI Team will organise an Internal Review panel. The Internal Review is a last chance for the NIO to correct any errors which may have been made first time round. This will ensure that if the case is further appealed to the Information Commissioner, it will be apparent that full and thorough consideration has been given to the request. The Panel plays an important role in being able to either validate or challenge the original decision and thereby potentially prevent a case from being investigated by the Information Commissioner.

2. Logging & Organizing Internal Reviews

2.1 The FoI Team will log and acknowledge the request for internal review, and then contact senior officials to check for availability. To preserve the independence of the Panel and ensure that the review is carried out without any improper influence, officials who were involved in processing the original request should not sit on the Internal Review Panel. The internal review should take place within 20 days of receipt of the request, and a further 2 weeks is allowed for the findings of the Panel to be implemented. The FoI Team will inform the division who lead on the original request and if necessary, ask for any hard copy papers to be copied and made available to the officials sitting on the Panel. Finally, the FoI Team will ensure that a venue is arranged and that someone from the FoI Team is available to attend the review or otherwise be available for questions.

3. Makeup of the Panel

3.1 All senior officials at Grade A or above may be asked to sit on a Panel to consider a request for Internal Review. Depending on the complexity or the profile of the information concerned, the Panel may consist of 2 or 3 senior officials. A member of the FoI Team will also attend in order to facilitate the review, but will not participate in the deliberations, except to provide technical advice on the FoI Act or related matters.

4. Preparations for the Panel

4.1 Once the Panel membership has been agreed and a date for the sitting confirmed, the FoI Team will email out the relevant paperwork. This will consist of:

- Original request
- Response
- Copies of papers released
- Any other supporting documentation such as third party or legal comments
- Internal Review Panel Form

4.2 The division which led on the case originally will be responsible for providing copies of any hard copy documents which have not been scanned into TRIM due to either the volume of papers involved or the sensitivity of the subject matter.

5. Conduct of the Internal Review - Preparation

5.1 On receipt of the papers you should read through them to familiarise yourself with the content and the issues and the reasons why the applicant has appealed. You should satisfy yourself that you understand the reasons why the original response was issued and what you will be required to consider as a Panel member.

5.2 Points to consider include but are not limited to:

- What legal advice has been given? Does this need to be reviewed?
- Which exemptions have been applied and have they been applied correctly?
- Have the necessary Public Interest Test considerations been carried out, properly with reasons both for and against release of information clearly articulated to the applicant?
- Are there any new considerations which were not part of the original decision making process?

5.3 Panel members may at any time seek further information from the lead division as to why certain original decisions were taken. The FoI Team should be consulted if there are issues over the application of exemptions or any other legislative or process related questions.

6. Conduct of the Internal Review

6.1 A member of the FoI Team will either attend the sitting of the Panel or be available for questions. One member of the Panel should be responsible for making notes of the Panel's deliberations and comments throughout, using the Internal Review Form which will be provided. Panel members should

bring all the relevant papers to the meeting. The Panel should then commence the review of the Department's original response, in light of the applicant's original request and their request for Internal Review. The documents should be worked through methodically and comments made against each substantive point. At any time the Panel may ask questions of the lead division or refer to the FoI Team for guidance.

7. Decisions

7.1 The Panel has a choice of outcomes. It can uphold the original decision entirely, uphold the original decision in part, or conclude that the information should have been released. The Panel may conclude that the information has been correctly withheld for instance, but that the incorrect exemption was applied, or that insufficient public interest test considerations were put forward. Whatever decision is made must be documented on the panel review form which is provided and the reasons for that decision made clear. If further work is required from the lead division, they will need to be able to understand the Panel's comments and reasoning.

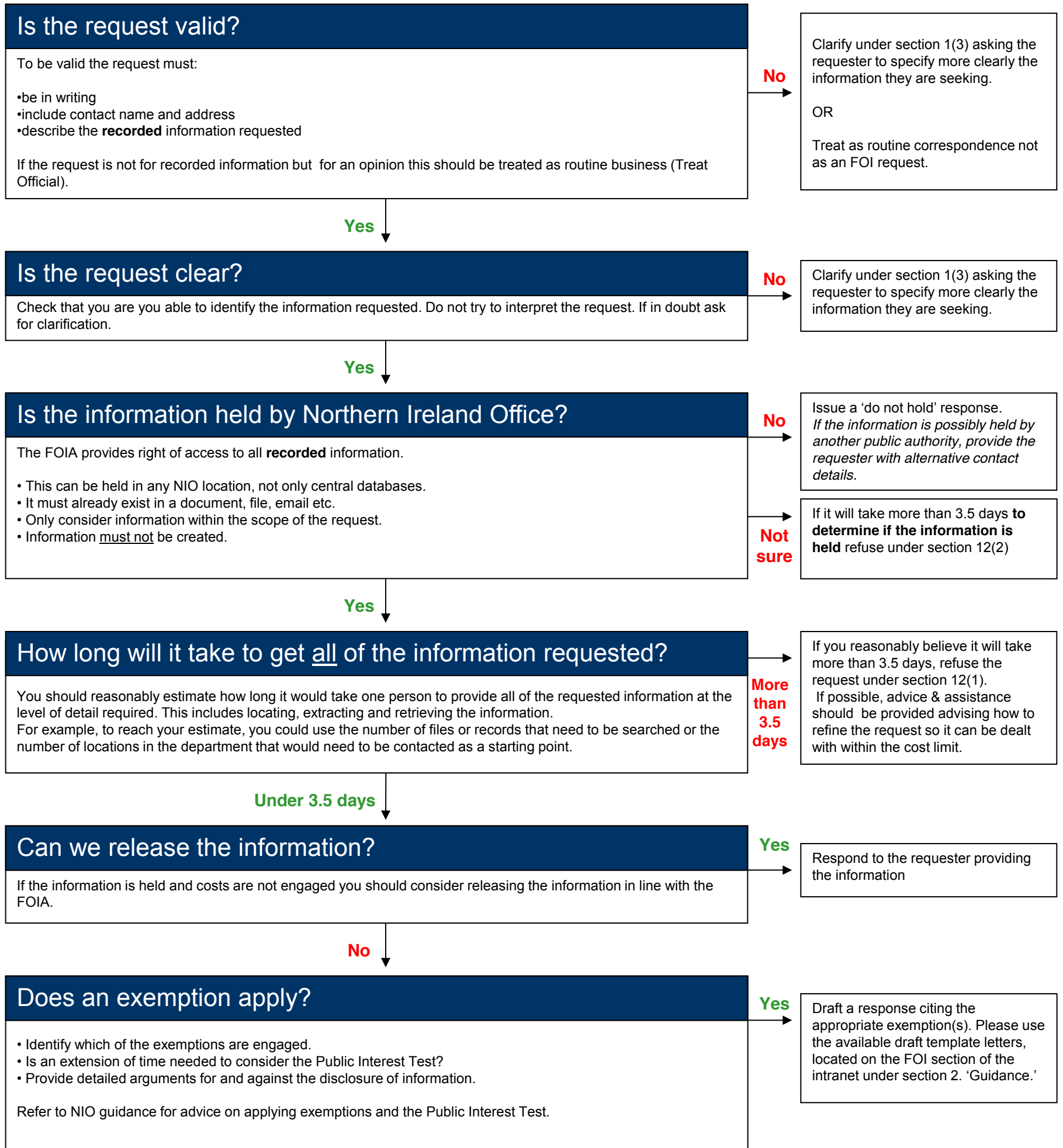
8. Follow-Up

8.1 The completed Panel Review Form should be returned to the FoI Team once all Panel members are content with the comments. The FoI Team will then liaise with the lead division if further work is required. On completion of the work, the division will circulate the draft response to the Panel and the FoI Team for review. The Panel should at this stage ensure that it is satisfied that the division has actioned the points raised by the Panel. Once there has been agreement, the FoI Team will issue the response to the applicant. All documentation relating to the Internal Review will be logged in TRIM and will be made available to the Information Commissioner should the applicant appeal further.

9. Right of Further Appeal

9.1 If the applicant is not satisfied with the results of the Internal Review, the FoI Act gives them a further right of appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office. The ICO then has the powers to review all documentation relating to the request and to the Internal Review, and if they are not satisfied can issue a Decision Notice or commence enforcement action.

This easy reference flow-chart breaks the FOI handling process down into clear and logical steps. On receipt of a request for information, please consider each stage below to ensure that every response you handle is compliant with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).



Freedom of Information Act 2000 - General introduction

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1. Background

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) was introduced in January 2005 and gives any individual a right of access to any recorded information held by a Public Authority.

The FOI Act specifies that as a public authority we are obliged to respond to FOI requests. For individual requests we must comply with the following sections of the FOIA:

Section 1: Inform the applicant (in writing) if we **hold** the information falling within the scope of the request and communicate it to the requester.

Section 16: Provide **advice and assistance** to the requester.

Section 17: Should any information be **exempt**, specify the relevant exemption(s) engaged and state why the exemption is engaged.

2. Timescales – 20 working days

Section 10(1) of the Act states that the statutory deadline in which to respond to a request is 20 working days following the date of receipt (this excludes public and bank holidays).

Should you receive an FOI request directly from a member of the public, it is vital that you forward it to the FOI team to formally log and process. We need to ensure that you have enough time to handle and respond to a request within the statutory deadline.

Exceptions to the 20 day statutory deadline

Section 10(3) of the Act provides for a 'reasonable' extension to the 20 working day statutory timescale (up to a maximum of 40 days - as defined by the Information Commissioner) in particular circumstances. If a qualified exemption is engaged and you are still assessing the Public Interest Test (PIT) for and against disclosure you may be entitled to apply for a public interest extension. You can find further information relating to PIT arguments below at page 8.

Please note that the threshold for applying a PIT extension is extremely high. You can not extend for timeliness reasons, for example; you only considered the request on day 10 and do not have enough time to deal with it within the deadline.

If you are considering a PIT extension, you should contact the FOI team as soon as possible.



3. What is an FOI request? Is it valid?

A valid FOI request must:

- 1) Be submitted in writing, e.g. by letter, email, fax, twitter
- 2) Provide clear contact details, e.g. a name and return address
- 3) Ask for recorded information, such a copy of a report or emails created by officials
- 4) Be clearly communicated, enabling staff to easily identify whether the information requested is held by the department.

Please note - the requester does not need to cite the FOIA in order for the request to be a valid FOI request. Nor does citing the FOIA automatically make it a valid request.

Who can make a request?

Anyone, anywhere, can make a request for information under the FOI Act. No distinction is made between people from the UK or from any other country. The Act is also requester blind; this means we cannot take into account who the individual is or why they have requested particular information.



4. Freedom of Information Vs routine correspondence (Treat Official)

You should be aware of the distinct difference between an FOI request and general correspondence. The FOIA only concerns requests for recorded information.

An FOI request will ask for:

- Copies of papers considered when making a decision on a policy
- A copy of a specific report
- Data/ statistics, including financial figures.

Routine correspondence will seek:

- General advice or explanations on a specific policy
- Opinions on a particular decision

You may find the easy reference guide below useful in differentiating the two separate information access regimes:

Freedom of Information requests	Treat Official/Ministerial correspondence
Requesting <i>recorded</i> information	Anything else!
Request for data	Question about data
Concrete	Subjective
e.g. Could I have a copy of your policy on...?	e.g. What is your policy on...?
Deadline of 20 working days to log and respond	Deadline of 15 working days for Ministerial and Treat Official correspondence

Please remember – often you will find a request for information can contain a combination of FOI and treat official questions. You can make a judgement call to whether a separate response is required, but on all occasions you must ensure that the FOI request is referred to the FOI team.



5. Do you hold the requested information?

'Held' and 'Recorded' information

Under the Act, information is held if it is held by the authority or by another person on behalf of the authority. Section 84 of the Act refers to information 'recorded in any form' and gives right of access to recorded information held at the time the request is received.

Recorded in any form includes;

- Information held electronically (e.g. laptop, computer, and electronic records management system)
- Information recorded on paper (e.g. letter, memo, papers in a file)
- Sound and video recordings (CD, videotape)
- Hand-written notes or comments, including those written in pads or on Post-it notes.
- E-mails
- Information in storage

Conducting searches for information

When searching for information, you should consider whether it might be stored on personal/ shared drives or on the department's EDM TRIM system. You should also consider whether the department holds a paper record on its on site, or off site, records stores.

Creating information

We are not required to create new information in order to answer a request. The FOIA enables access to information that already exists and is held on record. You should be clear of the distinction between creating new information and compiling it from different sources or extracting it from a database (i.e. 're-presenting' information in a different form to what it is held).

Clarification

It is extremely important to ensure that it is clear from the request, what information is being requested. If the requester does not describe the information sufficiently for you to be clear about what they want, section 1(3) of the act allows for us to issue a clarification response.

Once the requester submits a response that contains sufficient detail to enable you to identify the information they are seeking, the 20 working day deadline will commence.

Information not held.

If the information is not held by the department you must state this in the response. If you are aware of an alternative public authority that may hold the information you should direct the requester to the appropriate authority, providing the appropriate contact details.



6. Section 12 refusal – Cost limit

Once you have confirmed if the information is held, or is likely to be held by the department, the next step is to assess whether the information can be located, retrieved and extracted within the appropriate cost limit.

Section 12 is a refusal under the Act. We can refuse to respond if it would exceed the cost limit to provide the information requested.

Cost limit

The cost limit is calculated at £600 or the equivalent of 3.5 days of work at £25 an hour in order to LOCATE, RETRIEVE and EXTRACT the requested information.

The following activities should be calculated towards the cost limit:

- Determine if we hold the information requested
- Locate the information or documents containing the information
- Retrieve the information or documents
- Extract the information from the document containing it.

The following activities cannot be taken into consideration when making a cost calculation:

- Reading time
- Time spent redacting information
- Time taken to consult with other departments
- Consideration of an exemption, or seeking legal advice

Section 12(1)

This applies to information that we know is held. However, to provide the information it would exceed the cost limit.

For example – If a request asks for copies of all financial invoices and receipts for the department covering the period 2008 – 2013, it would be likely to take longer than 3.5 working days for a member of staff to locate, retrieve and extract all the information held by the department.

Section 12(2)

This applies when it would exceed the cost limit for you to confirm if the requested information is held by the department.

For example – If a request asks for copies of any emails between staff that contain reference to breaking news stories, 2008 – 2013, every member of staff within the department would need to be contacted and all inboxes and EDRM searched to determine whether any information is held. This is likely to exceed the cost limit.

Discretionary information

Please remember that you can always provide information outside of the FOIA, on a discretionary basis to be helpful. If at any time, especially when the cost limit is engaged, you have information which is readily available, you should consider disclosing it. There is no obligation to do so, but the department should aim to be as helpful and as transparent as it can be.



7. Exemptions

The exemptions in Part II of the Freedom of Information Act are 'absolute' or 'qualified'.

Absolute: If an absolute exemption applies, there is no obligation under the Act to consider the request for information further.

Qualified: If the exemption is qualified, the public authority must weigh the public interest in maintaining the exemption against the public interest in disclosure. This is the public interest test.

An easy reference list of all the FOIA exemptions falling under Absolute or Qualified can be found below. This list is also available from the Freedom of Information (FOI) Guidance section of the intranet.

Section 21	AE	Information accessible to an applicant by other means
Section 22	QE	information intended for future publication
Section 23	AE	Information supplied by, or related to, bodies dealing with security matters
Section 24	QE	National Security
Section 26	QE	Defence
Section 27	QE	International relations
Section 28	QE	Relations within the UK
Section 29	QE	The economy
Section 30	QE	Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities
Section 31	QE	law enforcement
Section 32	AE	Court records
Section 33	QE	Audit functions
Section 34	AE	Parliamentary privilege
Section 35	QE	Formulation of government policy
Section 36	QE	Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs
Section 37	AE	Communications with Her Majesty, members of the Royal Family, the Royal Household and awarding of Honours
Section 38	QE	Health and safety
Section 39	QE	Environmental information
Section 40	AE	Personal information
Section 41	AE	Information provided in confidence
Section 42	QE	Legal professional privilege
Section 43	QE	Commercial interests
Section 44	AE	Prohibitions on disclosure



8. Public Interest Test

A public authority can only withhold information if the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

The public interest here means the public good, not what is of interest to the public, and not the private interests of the requester.

In carrying out the public interest test you should consider the circumstances at the time of the request or within the normal life-cycle of a request. Public interest arguments for the exemption must relate specifically to that exemption.

You must consider the relative weight of the arguments for and against disclosure. This can be affected by the likelihood and severity of any prejudice; the age of the information; how far the requested information will help public understanding; and whether similar information is already in the public domain.

The public interest can cover a wide range of values and principles relating to the public good, or what is in the best interests of society. Some generic arguments you could offer for information falling in favour of disclosure could be:

- There is a public interest in transparency and accountability, to promote public understanding and to safeguard democratic processes.
- There is a public interest in good decision-making by public bodies, in upholding standards of integrity, in ensuring justice and fair treatment for all, in securing the best use of public resources and in ensuring fair commercial competition in a mixed economy.

However, these examples of the public interest do not in themselves automatically mean that information should be disclosed or withheld. For example, an informed and involved public helps to promote good decision making by public bodies, but those bodies may also need space and time in which to fully consider their policy options, to enable them to reach an impartial and appropriate decision, away from public interference. Revealing information about wrongdoing may help the course of justice, but investigations into wrongdoing may need confidentiality to be effective. This suggests that in each case, the public interest test involves identifying the appropriate public interests and assessing the extent to which they are served by disclosure or by maintaining an exemption.

You will find further information on the public interest arguments specific to each exemption on the Information Commissioner's Office website under 'Exemptions':

http://www.ico.org.uk/for_organisations/guidance_index/freedom_of_information_and_environmental_information

The FOI team will be on hand to assist should you need to consider a Public Interest Test.





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Freedom of Information Team

April 2014

REFERENCE: FOI – 14/61

You requested the following information:

- **How many of your staff work part-time and what was the number for each year since 2004?**
- **How many employees work from home full-time and what was the number for each year since 2004?**
- **Is there a formal flexible working policy within your department, and does it allow employees to work from the location of their choosing?**
- **Do you have the technical capabilities to enable employees to work flexibly (i.e. work from home as if they were in the office) and are there any restrictions on the level of staff (i.e. seniority) able to do so?**
- **Are there any specific benefits available for those individuals with families in your department (e.g. childcare vouchers)?**
- **How many employees who care for someone (e.g. a child or adult) have submitted statutory applications requesting the legal right to work flexibly for each of the past ten years and what proportion were successful?**

Your request has been handled under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

As you may be aware, the devolution of policing and justice powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly took place on 12 April 2010. These functions were previously under the remit of the Northern Ireland Office, therefore devolution had a significant impact on the size, shape and structure of the department. Therefore, comparable figures for the NIO as it is now configured following the completion of devolution do not exist. The figures given below are from 2010 onwards.

- **How many of your staff work part-time and what was the number for each year since 2004?**

The number of part-time employees is as follows:

2010-11 - 18
2011-12 - 18
2012-13 - 17
2013-14 - 13

- **How many employees work from home full-time and what was the number for each year since 2004?**

Since 2010, no employees have worked from home full-time.

- **Is there a formal flexible working policy within your department, and does it allow employees to work from the location of their choosing?**

Under the statutory rights of the flexible working policy, employees can make one application for a flexible working/work life balance per 12-month period for the following:

- part year working
- term-time working
- reduced hours
- compressed hours
- job-sharing

The location will be subject to business requirements.

- **Do you have the technical capabilities to enable employees to work flexibly (i.e. work from home as if they were in the office) and are there any restrictions on the level of staff (i.e. seniority) able to do so?**

There are no restrictions on the level of staff who may work from home. Staff working from home are able to do so in a way that is compatible with working in the office.

- **Are there any specific benefits available for those individuals with families in your department (e.g. childcare vouchers)?**

We offer a Salary Sacrifice Scheme for Childcare Vouchers, which enables staff to choose their own childcare provider (subject to meeting eligibility requirements) and to have their childcare costs reduced as a result of tax savings. It covers childcare for children up to the age of 15 (or 16 if the child has a disability).

- **How many employees who care for someone (e.g. a child or adult) have submitted statutory applications requesting the legal right to work flexibly for each of the past ten years and what proportion were successful?**

Since 2010, no formal applications requesting the legal right to work flexibly have been received from employees with caring responsibilities.



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Freedom of Information Team

April 2014

REFERENCE: FOI 14/64

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO):

- I would like to know how much the department has spent on cars on an annual basis for the last three calendar years. This includes hiring cars and purchasing cars. I would like to know what car was hired/purchased, when it was hired/purchased, what it was used for, who was using it and how much it cost to hire/purchase.
- I would also like to know if the department spent any money on personalised number plates, If so I would like to know how much was spent on an annual basis for the past three calendar years, what cars they were attached to, who was using the cars, and (if this can be released) what they said.

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The Northern Ireland Office spend on cars is divided across three different categories –

1. Government Car Service (GCS) (London)
2. Leased cars (Belfast)
3. Hire cars (Belfast)

Please note that the information you require is recorded by financial year. In order to provide this information to you in an alternative format, such as by calendar year, it would involve the manual inspection of a large number of individual records which would exceed the disproportionate cost limit. Therefore the information that has been provided to you is in financial year format.

1. **Government Car Service** is a contract to supply a car for the use of NIO Ministers, and in certain circumstances, officials on departmental business in and around the London area. In 2011/12, the Department was charged on a usage basis, therefore costs fluctuated depending on time of day and extent of usage. With effect from 2012/13, this

'pay as you go' arrangement ceased and the NIO, in common with other Whitehall Departments, could only access the Government Car Service by way of a contract with a set annual fee of £80k. The figures for the last two financial years also include the London Congestion Charge, driver overtime charges for out of hours work and VAT. Spend for the last three financial years is as follows:

YEAR	COST
2011/12	£34,289.00
2012/13	£105,503.00
2013/14	£104,451.00

2. Leased Cars (Belfast) – the Department uses a pool of cars in Belfast which are utilised by NIO staff on official business in Northern Ireland. Spend for the last three years against each car in this category is as follows:

2011/12	CAR MAKE/MODEL	CONTRACT TYPE	PERIOD OF HIRE	COST
	Vauxhall Insignia	Lease	01/04/11 - 31/03/12	£7,054.62
	Vauxhall Insignia	Lease	01/04/11 - 31/03/12	£7,054.62
	VW Tiguan	Lease	01/04/11 - 31/03/12	£5,040.00
				<i>£19,149.24</i>

2012/13	CAR MAKE/MODEL	CONTRACT TYPE	PERIOD OF HIRE	COST
	Ford Mondeo	Lease	01/04/12 - 31/03/13	£8,156.27
	Ford Mondeo	Lease	01/04/12 - 31/03/13	£8,156.27
	Volvo S80	Lease	01/04/12 - 31/03/13	£8,553.76
	VW Tiguan	Lease	01/04/12 - 31/03/13	£5,040.00
	BMW X3	Rental Hire	01/07/12 - 31/03/13	£6,136.80
				<i>£36,043.10</i>

2013/14	CAR MAKE/MODEL	CONTRACT TYPE	PERIOD OF HIRE	COST
	Ford Mondeo	Lease	01/04/12 - 31/03/13	£8,156.27

Ford Mondeo	Lease	01/04/12 - 31/03/13	£8,156.27
Volvo S80	Lease	01/04/12 - 31/03/13	£8,553.76
VW Tiguan	Lease	01/04/12 - 31/03/13	£5,040.00
BMW X3	Rental Hire	01/07/12 - 31/03/13	£6,136.80
			£36,043.10

3. Hire Cars (Belfast) – the Department hires cars on occasion as part of the support provided for VIP official visits to Northern Ireland. These cars are Multi-Purpose Vehicles (MPV's) and are used for transporting staff/visitors and/or luggage as part of the wider logistical platform. Spend for the last three years against each car in this category is as follows:

2011/12	CAR MAKE/MODEL	CONTRACT TYPE	PERIOD OF HIRE	COST
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	08/06/11 - 10/06/11	£72.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	08/06/11 - 10/06/11	£72.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	22/07/11 - 27/07/11	£252.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	25/07/11 - 26/07/11	£84.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	27/03/12 - 30/03/12	£126.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	27/03/12 - 30/03/12	£126.00
				£732.00

2012/13	CAR MAKE/MODEL	CONTRACT TYPE	PERIOD OF HIRE	COST
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	26/04/12 - 27/04/12	£84.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	27/03/12 -	£126.00

		30/03/12	
Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	28/05/12 - 30/05/12	£84.00
Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	25/06/12 - 28/06/12	£126.00
Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	25/06/12 - 28/06/12	£126.00
Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	25/07/12 - 01/08/12	£126.00
Ford S-Max	Rental Hire	31/07/12 - 31/07/12	£42.00
Ford S-Max	Rental Hire	30/07/12 - 02/08/12	£126.00
Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	09/10/12 - 12/10/12	£126.00
Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	05/11/12 - 07/11/12	£126.00
Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	13/11/12 - 16/11/12	£126.00
Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	19/11/12 - 21/11/12	£84.00
Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	19/11/12 - 21/11/12	£84.00
			<i>£1,386.00</i>

2013/14	CAR MAKE/MODEL	CONTRACT TYPE	PERIOD OF HIRE	COST
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	29/04/13 - 01/05/13	£84.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	20/05/13 - 21/05/13	£42.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	24/06/13 - 27/06/13	£126.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	09/09/13 - 10/09/13	£42.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	10/10/13 - 11/10/13	£84.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	10/10/13 - 11/10/13	£84.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	23/10/13 - 25/10/13	£84.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	23/10/13 - 26/10/13	£96.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	23/10/13 - 26/10/13	£96.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	23/10/13 - 26/10/13	£96.00
	Ford Galaxy	Rental Hire	23/10/13 - 26/10/13	£96.00
			<i>£930.00</i>	

The Northern Ireland Office has not spent any money on personalised number plates in the last three financial years.



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Freedom of Information Team

April 2014

REFERENCE: 14/68

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office:

I would like to ask how many terrorist attacks have been aimed at public authorities within Northern Ireland in the last year.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold the information you have requested.

You may wish to note that there were thirty National Security attacks recorded in 2013, and to date, twelve have been recorded in 2014. This includes attacks against a range of public bodies including Government, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Prison Service and Military establishments. It also includes attacks against public spaces, such as the December 2013 attacks at Victoria Square.

In looking at these figures it may also be helpful to consider the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland's six monthly statement to Parliament on the Northern Ireland Security Situation, which was last laid on 29 January. A copy is attached for ease of reference and can also be found on the NIO Website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/northern-ireland-security-situation>.





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Freedom of Information Team

May 2014

REFERENCE: 14/73

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office:

Could you please provide the following under FOI from the Northern Ireland Office / Secretary of State for Northern Ireland:

- 1. The number of appeals lodged against decisions of the Chief Constable in respect of firearm certificates in the last 3 years.**
- 2. The number of successful appeals against the decision of the Chief Constable in respect of firearm certificates in the last 3 years.**

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I can confirm that the department holds information falling within the scope of your request.

202 firearms appeals were received in the period 01/01/11 – 31/12/13. There were 16 successful appeals.





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11 April, 2014

REFERENCE: FOI – 14/75

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO):

- **How many calls have been made to the 123 Speaking Clock since 13/09/13 and at what cost.**
- **How many calls have been made to directory inquiries 118 numbers since 13/09/13 and at what cost.**

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

This information is not held by the department. You may wish to note that 123 and 118 are classed as a “premium rate” numbers and such numbers are blocked from use by staff in the department.



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Freedom of Information Team

April 2014

REFERENCE: FOI – 14/76

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO):

How much money has been spent by the department in each of the past 4 years on apps for staff smartphones and tablets.

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The NIO has not incurred any expenditure on apps for staff smartphones and tablets in the past 4 years.



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Freedom of Information Team

May 2014

REFERENCE: 14/79

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO):

I should like to request, under Freedom of Information, copies of any political, economic or defence assessments provided to/for Secretary of State Brooke in respect of his speech in London in November 1990, during which he said that the British Government had no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I can confirm that the Department does not hold information falling within the scope of your request.

A search of the relevant NIO files, covering Political Development and other policy areas relating to Northern Ireland for this period was carried out. There is nothing in NIO files for the period to indicate that any political, economic or defence assessments were prepared in respect of the Brooke speech.





Northern Ireland Office
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Freedom of Information Team

May 2014

REFERENCE: FOI - 14/83

You requested the release of the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO);

I am requesting access to the annual resource accounts of the Northern Ireland Office from 1994-2004 which could not be found online. Would you be able to assist me with finding these documents and releasing them?

The department does not hold the information you have requested covering the period 1994 – 2004.

All government departmental accounts are published. You may wish to contact The House of Commons as any document that has been laid before Parliament, including the Resource Accounts should be available in the library. I have provided the following link to the House of Commons Parliamentary Archives webpage for further information:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/parliamentary-archives/archives-practical/>

The Stationery Office (TSO) are responsible for publishing NIO accounts, and as such, may retain some record of older accounts published, if not out of print.

You should note that 2001-2002 was the first year of Resource Accounting. Prior to this, the accounts were Appropriation Accounts, therefore these accounts may not be comparable for research purposes.





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May 2014

REFERENCE: 14/84

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office:

Please provide a monthly breakdown of the number of e-petitions rejected by the department since the government's official e-petitions website was established.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Overall responsibility for e-petitions lies with the Leader of the House of Commons Office and I can inform you that they are responding to your request.





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Freedom of Information Team

April 2014

REFERENCE: 14/85

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office:

For the last three years, broken down by year:

- 1. The number of unauthorised incidents/breaches of the data protection act by members of the department accessing databases and personal information which they are not authorised to have access to, including the month of each incident.**
- 2. In each incident/data protection breach what information was accessed or attempted to be accessed.**
- 3. In each incident/data protection breach whether any disciplinary action was taken against the member of staff which was involved and the nature of the disciplinary action – where they are of an appropriate level for disclosure please include the position of the member of staff, i.e. senior civil servant.**
- 4. Details of the any members of staff resigning due to incidents/data breaches - – where they are of an appropriate level for disclosure please include the position of the member of staff, i.e. senior civil servant.**

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

A data security breach as defined by the Information Commissioner's Office, concerns the unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data. This includes any accidental loss, destruction of or damage to personal data.

I can confirm there have been no data losses, leaks or breaches of the Data Protection Act that meet the requirements for reporting to the ICO or other statutory authority, recorded by this Department during the last three years.





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May 2014

REFERENCE: 14/86

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office:

I would like to know if the NIO has a copy of the 1976 'The Way Ahead' Report drafted by Merilyn Rees - that reviewed the military strategy and led to the process of 'Ulsterisation'.

If so, am I able to retrieve a copy?

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The department does not hold the information you have requested. A copy of the 1976 'The Way Ahead' report formed part of a file that was transferred to The National Archives on open transfer. This file, reference CJ 4 1204, is open and available for public viewing. I have provided the following link to the file on The National Archives website for further information:

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/Details?uri=C11300304>





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Freedom of Information Team

May 2014

REFERENCE: FOI – 14/87

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO):

An annual breakdown since May 2010 of the number of attempts made to access the following websites via your servers:

www.totaljobs.com

www.jobsite.co.uk

www.reed.co.uk/jobs

www.fish4.co.uk

www.indeed.co.uk

www.monster.co.uk

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The NIO receives managed ICT services from IT Assist Confidential (ITAC), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance and Personnel, Northern Ireland (DFPNI). Upon receipt of your request, DFPNI have advised that they only hold this information from 1 February 2014 and have issued the following response:

URL**Number of Attempts 1/2/2014 to 29/4/2014**

www.totaljobs.com	15
www.jobsite.co.uk	0
www.reed.co.uk/jobs	40
www.fish4.co.uk	0
www.indeed.co.uk	317
www.monster.co.uk	0



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Freedom of Information Team

May 2014

REFERENCE: FOI – 14/88

You asked:

"How many departmental contracts have been awarded to the company "Serco" by your department in the years of 2012 and 2013?"

Please provide a breakdown of when the contract was awarded, what Serco were contractually obliged to do, and the cost of the contract, plus any costs incurred since the contract was awarded.

Your query has been handled as a request for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I can confirm that no contracts have been awarded to Serco by the Northern Ireland Office in 2012 and 2013.





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May 2014

REFERENCE: 14/89

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO):

Further to the Government's Procurement Policy Note: Measures to Promote Tax Compliance (Action Note 06/13), I would like to know how many Occasions of Non-Compliance have been disclosed to the department for Northern Ireland by businesses applying for public sector contracts from your department.

I am interested in finding out:

- A. The number of businesses that have disclosed any tax avoidance practices in the process of their tendering for a contract from department for Northern Ireland following the Government's Procurement Policy Note: Measures to Promote Tax Compliance?**
- B. In how many cases has the disclosure of any tax avoidance by businesses resulted in a decision to exclude the business from the procurement process?**

Please provide this information from the 1st April 2013 to 28th February 2014.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The department does not hold the information you have requested. During the period requested, contracts were tendered by the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) and the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) on behalf of the NIO.

You may wish to approach CCS and CPD direct. I have provided the following links to CCS and CPD websites for further information:

<http://ccs.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/>

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/cpd>



May 2014

REFERENCE: FOI – 14/91

You requested the following information:

I would like to know the Northern Ireland Office's total spend on recruitment for the financial year 2013/2014 ending in April 2014.

In regards to the Northern Ireland Office's recruitment:

- 1) How many positions have you advertised in the same date period (i.e. last financial year)?**
- 2) What were the position titles that were advertised (e.g. administrator)?**
- 3) What date were these positions advertised?**
- 4) How many of these positions were filled?**
- 5) What dates were these positioned filled?**

Your request has been handled under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The answers to the information you requested are as follows:

The Northern Ireland Office did not spend any money on recruitment during the 2013/14 financial year.

1. During the 13/14 financial year we advertised 24 posts.
2. The titles and dates of the posts advertised in 2013/14 and dates filled are set out in the table below. Date filled relates to the date the successful applicant took up the post. 22 of the posts advertised in 2013/14 have been filled.

3.

Post	Date Advertised	Date Filled
Parliamentary Clerk	24/04/2013	08/07/2013
Deputy Head of Corporate Services	02/05/2013	03/07/2013
Electronic Records Manager	05/05/2013	02/07/2013
Legacy Team	14/05/2013	03/09/2013
Head of Resilience	14/05/2013	16/09/2013
Head of Stability and Cohesion Unit	28/05/2013	09/09/2013
Strategy Policy Advisor	31/05/2013	29/10/2013
Project Support Officer	10/06/2013	05/08/2013
Policy Advisor, Economic Policy x 2	17/06/2013	28/10/2013
Deputy Director -Economy	29/07/2013	14/10/2013
Senior Policy Advisor, Economy Group	29/07/2013	21/10/2013
Corporate Governance Co-ordinator	07/08/2013	01/12/2013
Senior Policy Advisor, Pursue Unit	20/08/2013	03/01/2014
Assistant Incident Response Co-ordinator	30/08/2013	13/01/2014
Head of Human Resources	01/10/2013	10/02/2014
Head of Politics and Rights	14/10/2013	22/01/2014
Accountant	14/11/2013	17/02/2014
Executive Officer, Finance Section	14/11/2013	03/02/2014
Deputy Head of Estates and Services	09/12/2013	03/02/2014
Head of Business Delivery Group	16/12/2013	10/03/2014
Policy Advisor	03/02/2013	05/03/2014
Policy Advisor, Strategy	16/12/2013	26/5/2014

& Operations Team		
Policy Advisor, Pursue Unit	24/03/2014	16/6/2014

June 2014

REFERENCE: FOI – 14/92

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO):

- 1: How much did you spend on your IT systems in 2013?**
- 2: What enterprise storage brands did you purchase in 2013?**
- 3: How much did you spend on enterprise storage in 2013 and how many raw terabytes (TB) of capacity did you get?**
- 4: How much did you spend on open-source storage or Software-Defined-Storage in 2013 and how many raw terabytes (TB) of capacity did you get?**
- 5: How much data do you have stored digitally currently?**

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

1. In 2013 the Department spent £345,400 on its IT systems.
- 2 – 5. The NIO receives managed ICT services from IT Assist Confidential (ITAC), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance and Personnel, Northern Ireland. The provision of this service is covered by a Service Level Agreement. The information requested is, therefore, not held by this Department. This information may be available from the Department of Finance and Personnel, Northern Ireland who can be contacted at info.csd@dfpni.gov.uk



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Freedom of Information Team

May 2014

REFERENCE: FOI – 14/94

You requested the following information:

Under the Freedom of Information Act please can you provide details of compensation claims made by your employees in 2013.

How many compensation claims by staff were made?

How many claims were successful?

Please give details of the position of the staff member involved, the amount paid out in both compensation and legal fees and details of the injury and the incident.

Please can you repeat the above questions for 2012 and 2011.

Your request has been handled under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) has not received any claims from employees for personal injury compensation in the years 2011, 2012 and 2013.



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June 2014

REFERENCE: 14/95

You requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO):

To request copies of the minutes of meetings (from 16th November 1981 to 20th November 1981) in which the recent murder of Reverend Robert Bradford MP was discussed AND/OR correspondence from November 1981 to or from then Secretary of State Jim Prior in which the murder of Reverend Bradford was discussed.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

A search was conducted by officials to identify any information falling within the scope of the first part of your request. A search through the departments Electronic Documents Records Management System (EDRMS) identified 23 physical files that hold papers ranging between the 16 November to 20 November 1981. Each physical file title was assessed for relevance. I can confirm that none of these files were deemed relevant of holding any information relating to the murder of Reverend Bradford.

A search covering the second part of your request was conducted. EDRMS identified 104 physical files contained papers covering November 1981. Each physical file title was again assessed for relevance. The title of a single file was considered relevant of potentially holding information you require. Following a manual inspection of this file I can confirm that no information falling within the scope of your request is held.



As previously advised, a number of 1981 files have been transferred to The National Archives (TNA). I have provided the following link to the TNA website for further information:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

