

XXXX
XXXX

data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk

August 2019

Dear XXXX

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – 190718026

You asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice:

For each of quarters 2, 3 and 4 of 2018 and quarter 1 of 2019 and for all applications (be it by litigants in person and by solicitors) broken down separately into applications (divorce) made on paper and applications made online, we request the following information:

- 1) How many divorce petitions were issued?**
- 2) For how many of those petitions were Acknowledgements of Service received by the Court;**
- 3) For how many of those petitions were Decrees Nisi pronounced; and**
- 4) For how many of those petitions were Decrees Absolute pronounced.**

Please also provide the same information in (1)-(4) above specifically for those petitions issued online on 25 December 2018.

We request that the information requested above in relation to online petitions only is broken down into those petitions issued by litigants in person and petitions issued by solicitors.

In the event that you cannot provide the information regarding this supplemental request, then we simply request the overall information as above.

Your request has been handled under FOIA.

It has been passed to me because I have responsibility for answering requests relating to data in Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS). HMCTS is an executive agency of the MoJ and is responsible for the administration of the magistrates' courts, the Crown Court, the County Court, the Family Court, the High Court, Court of Appeal and tribunals in England and Wales and non-devolved tribunals in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

I am not fully clear about the data that you are requesting. For example, the first part of your question asks for data regarding "Applications" (which HMCTS would normally interpret as "Application Received") and yet Question One asks about "Petitions Issued". In the penultimate part of your request you ask for information relating to Qs 1-4 relating to "Petitions issued on-line on (Christmas Day). Although Applications may be received on line

on 25 December it is unlikely that any Petitions would be issued as that is a Bank Holiday for HMCTS staff.

However, rather than ask for clarification of your request, and in accordance with Section 16 of FOIA where MoJ is required to provide advice and assistance, so far as it would be reasonable to expect to do so, I have interpreted all of your questions as relating to Applications Received. You are, of course, fully entitled to submit any further FOIA request to MoJ which will be issued with a new FOIA reference number.

Within the above, I can confirm that the MoJ holds the information that you have requested and I have provided some of it below.

Regarding Questions one-four and the additional question specifically relating to 25 December 2018:-

From: 01-APR-2018
To: 31-MAR-2019

Application Type	QTR	Applications Received	Acks. of Service received by the Court	Decree Nisi	Decree Absolute
Paper Applications	Qtr 2 2018	27,103	23,999	23,359	17,548
	Qtr 3 2018	21,027	18,166	16,904	10,640
	Qtr 4 2018	21,041	17,746	14,044	6,391
	Qtr 1 2019	17,734	14,167	4,999	853
On-Line Applications	Qtr 2 2018	5,056	4,503	3,992	3,421
	Qtr 3 2018	8,557	7,524	5,669	3,781
	Qtr 4 2018	7,674	6,585	3,239	887
	Qtr 1 2019	11,338	9,103	2,564	724

Date: 25-DEC-2018

On-Line apps.		11	11	6	0
----------------------	--	----	----	---	---

Notes regarding the above data:

- Acks. of Service, Nisi's and Absolutes Pronounced relate to the Applications received in the denoted time period.
- Every effort is made to ensure that the figures presented are accurate and complete. However, it is important to note that the data have been extracted from large administrative data systems generated by the courts. As a consequence, care should

be taken to ensure data collection processes and their inevitable limitations are taken into account when data are used.

- Data are taken from a live management information system and can change over time.
- Data are Management Information and are not subject to the same level of checks as official statistics
- The data provided are the most recent available and for that reason might differ slightly from any previously published information.
- Data has not been cross referenced with case files.

Concerning your supplemental question, the HMCTS Family Court case management and management information systems only hold information relating to litigants in person and solicitors as is the current position. The status regarding the representation attached to an individual Application may change throughout the life of that Petition. Again, in accordance with FOIA Section 16, I have not considered whether this question might result in the whole of FOIA request 190718026 being refused on cost grounds under Sections 12(1) or 12(2) of FOIA or whether other FOIA exemptions would apply.

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within two months of the date of this response.

data.access@justice.gov.uk

Disclosure Team, Ministry of Justice, 10.38, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely

XXXX