

QUARTER 3 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSES

Year	Month	FOI Reference	Topic
2017	Jul	FOI/17/069	Ministerial visits and travel expenses
2017	Jul	FOI/17/072	Booking staff travel and claiming travel expenses
2017	Jul	FOI/17/075	Downhill Estate funding information
2017	Jul	FOI/17/076	Royal Prerogative of Mercy pardons
2017	Jul	FOI/17/077	Archival file request: CJ 4/5804
2017	Jul	FOI/17/080	Internet Connection Records
2017	Jul	FOI/17/081	Archival file request: Northern Ireland security policy records
2017	Jul	FOI/17/082	Ministerial correspondence with Prince Andrew
2017	Jul	FOI/17/083	Flowers, floral arrangements and Lancaster House hospitality costs
2017	Jul	FOI/17/084	FOI statistics
2017	Jul	FOI/17/085	Donors and lenders to Northern Irish political parties
2017	Jul	FOI/17/087	Payments made to celebrities
2017	Jul	FOI/17/089	Catering operations: food procurement
2017	Jul	FOI/17/091	Recruitment spending
2017	Aug	FOI/17/073	Expense processes
2017	Aug	FOI/17/078	Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) MPs: links with loyalist paramilitary groups
2017	Aug	FOI/17/092	Brexit risk register
2017	Aug	FOI/17/093	Political party donations
2017	Aug	FOI/17/094	IT Service management
2017	Aug	FOI/17/097	Correspondence with political parties on donation disclosures
2017	Aug	FOI/17/098	Secondments
2017	Aug	FOI/17/099	Royal Prerogative of Mercy pardons
2017	Aug	FOI/17/100	Correspondence on donation disclosures
2017	Aug	FOI/17/101	Vehicles owned or leased by the department
2017	Aug	FOI/17/102	Proposed language act for Northern Ireland
2017	Aug	FOI/17/103	Grade C assessment exercise

2017	Aug	FOI/17/104	Secret, classified, confidential or restricted documents circulated to senior officials or ministers
2017	Aug	FOI/17/105	Senior appointments in the civil service
2017	Aug	FOI/17/106	Fixed telecommunications and internet services
2017	Aug	FOI/17/107	Employment of illegal immigrants
2017	Aug	FOI/17/108	Managed print services
2017	Aug	FOI/17/109	Criminal damage compensation
2017	Aug	FOI/17/110	Correspondence with political parties on donation disclosures
2017	Aug	FOI/17/111	Spending on consultancy services
2017	Aug	FOI/17/112	Secondments
2017	Aug	FOI/17/113	Spending on advertising
2017	Aug	FOI/17/114	Employment of European Union nationals
2017	Sep	FOI/17/115	Donation or donations documents
2017	Sep	FOI/17/116	Information breaches
2017	Sep	FOI/17/117	Staff working off payroll
2017	Sep	FOI/17/118	Policy and guidance on the deletion of emails
2017	Sep	FOI/17/119	Brexit contingency plans
2017	Sep	FOI/17/120	PREVENT counter-terrorism strategy in Northern Ireland
2017	Sep	FOI/17/121	WhatsApp messages
2017	Sep	FOI/17/122	Crown properties in England and Wales
2017	Sep	FOI/17/123	Electronic credential checking
2017	Sep	FOI/17/124	Spending on private bathroom facilities
2017	Sep	FOI/17/125	Internet connection speeds
2017	Sep	FOI/17/126	Gender pay gap
2017	Sep	FOI/17/127	Food and catering services
2017	Sep	FOI/17/129	Staff employed by recruitment agencies and paid by umbrella companies
2017	Sep	FOI/17/131	NIO staffing breakdown
2017	Sep	FOI/17/132	Running cost of ALB websites
2017	Sep	FOI/17/133	Kaspersky cyber security software

2017	Sep	FOI/17/136	Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Annual Performance Appraisal Report suspensions
2017	Sep	FOI/17/137	Spending on social media campaigns

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/069
Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<p><i>I am submitting a Freedom of Information request with regards to ministerial visits in Northern Ireland. I am requesting the following information:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. The list of ministerial visits in Northern Ireland from 1 January 2017 to 31 May 2017 inclusive;</i> <i>2. For ministerial visits outside of Northern Ireland, the list of countries visited and the number of visits for each country (England, Scotland Wales treated as separate countries); and</i> <i>3. The total travel expenses for the Secretary of State during this period (broken down by mode of transport).</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>This request is denied under sections 21 and 22 of the FOI Act.</p> <p>In relation to questions one and two, the information you have requested, up until the end of March 2017, has been published on www.gov.uk at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nio-ministerial-quarterly-returns-january-march-2017</p> <p>Section 21 (sub section 1) of the Freedom of Information Act exempts disclosure of information that is reasonably accessible by other means, and the terms of the exemption mean that we do not have to consider whether or not it would be in the public interest for you to have the information.</p> <p>Further, we are not obliged to provide information that is intended for future publication (section 22 (sub section 1) of the Act). In line with the terms of this exemption in the Freedom of Information Act, we have considered whether it would be in the public interest for us to provide you with the information ahead of publication, despite the exemption being applicable. In this case, we have concluded that the public interest favours withholding the information.</p> <p>You can find out more about Section 22 by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter.</p>

You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/22>.

When assessing whether or not it was in the public interest to disclose the information to you, we took into account the following factors:

Public interest considerations favouring disclosure

- Disclosure would be consistent with the Government's commitment to increasing transparency

Public interest considerations favouring withholding the information

- it is the right decision to manage the availability of the information by planning and controlling its publication;
- the timetable properly requires internal consideration of the information prior to its public release; and
- This information should instead be available through our publication scheme.

We have therefore reached the view that, on balance, the public interest is better served by withholding this information under Section 22 of the Act at this time.

In relation to question 3, the law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for.

To comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such material, officials would be required to open and read a large amount of records individually, and to cross-reference multiple sources. You should not infer from this that the Northern Ireland Office holds a large amount of information relating to the subject you have asked about, only that we would need to search through a large amount of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request.

You can find out more about Section 12(1) by reading the full text of the Act, available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12>.

Although we cannot answer this section of your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a refined request within the cost limit. Please note that, as in this instance, a refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/072
Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<p><i>I have some FOI questions for the Northern Ireland Office.</i></p> <p><i>Please find the questions I would like answered below.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Does your department have any specific rules in place when it comes to booking staff travel?</i> <i>2. Does your department have software in place that allows staff to book trips, or are they expected to book it by their own means?</i> <i>3. Does your department have a specific person or team that is dedicated to booking travel for staff?</i> <i>4. How many people are required to sign off staff travel expenses?</i> <i>5. Is there a cap on the amount staff can claim for certain trips (e.g. national train travel, European air travel or intercontinental travel further abroad)</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>In relation to your specific questions please see the answers below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes the department does have specific rules when booking staff travel. 2. Yes the department does have software in place that allows staff to book trips. 3. No the department does not have a specific person or team that is dedicated to booking travel for staff. 4. One person is required to sign off expense. 5. There is not an overall cap for certain trips however expenses claimed must comply with the criteria in place for each trip.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/075
Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<p><i>I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from the Northern Ireland Office.</i></p> <p><i>The request relates to Northern Ireland Departmental funding of the National Trust at Downhill Estate/ Demense from 1948.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. ULSTER LAND FUND</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• In regards to the Ulster Land Fund I am seeking information regarding ALL funding to the National Trust at Downhill between the years 1946 and 1980, with particular reference to</i> <i>• Information on funding by The Ulster Land fund to assist The National Trust with the purchase of the Mussenden Temple and 13 acre of adjoining land from Frederick Smyth in 1949.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information on funding by The Ulster Land fund to assist The National Trust with the purchase of Portvantage Glen from Richard Ross Morrison in 1948.</i> • <i>Information on the grant of £4636 by The Ulster Land fund to assist The National Trust with restoration of the Mussenden Temple in 1953.</i> • <i>Taking into consideration the objectives of the Land Fund I would also like to know any information available on terms and conditions associated with the above acquisitions.</i> <p>2. <i>N.I. EXPENDABLE FUND</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information on the grant of £5,500 by the N.I. Expendable fund to assist The National Trust with acquisition of Downhill House in 1979.</i> <p>3. <i>N.I. JOB CREATION SCHEME</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information on any and all funding from the N.I. Job creation Scheme with regards to Capital cost, purchase, rebuild and stabilization of Downhill house.</i> <p>4. <i>N.I. DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information on endowment of £130,000 from the N.I. Department of Finance for additional wardening costs at Downhill House after the restoration in 1982. I have received a FOI response from DoF N.I. in regards to the Department's funding of Downhill but I am still unclear if the search included previous Finance departments in Northern Ireland following the return of devolved legislative powers to N.I in 1998.</i> <p>5. <i>ULSTER APPEAL</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information on the loan of £61,000 from the Ulster Appeal to help acquire the further 89 acre on the Downhill Estate.</i> <p>6. <i>GENERAL</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Any information on public funding of projects within the Downhill Estate/Demense from 1946 until the present date would be appreciated.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>We have undertaken a search of our records and I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within the scope of your request. The National Archives or the Public Records Office for Northern Ireland may be able to assist with your enquiry.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/076
Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<p><i>We would be obliged if you would provide us with the following information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act:</i></p> <p><i>1. The number of pardons that have been granted pursuant to the Royal Prerogative of Mercy in Northern Ireland from January 2011 to the present.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The Royal Prerogative of Mercy (RPM) can be exercised to grant a full pardon to somebody, or to commute their sentence, or to remit all or a portion of their sentence. We have taken your question to refer to any of these exercises of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy and can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold the information relevant to this request.</p> <p>As part of our duty to provide you with advice and assistance under s.16 of FOIA, it may assist you to know that whilst the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is responsible for recommending the Royal Prerogative of Mercy for terrorism-related cases in Northern Ireland, since the devolution of policing and justice in 2010, responsibility for making recommendations for the Royal Prerogative of Mercy in all other cases lies with the Minister of Justice in Northern Ireland. We can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office has not recommended to Her Majesty the Queen that the RPM be exercised in any cases since January 2011.</p> <p>You may wish to contact the Department of Justice as they may hold information relevant to your request.</p> <p>You can contact the Department of Justice Freedom of Information Team at the following:</p> <p>Department of Justice Freedom of Information Team Information Services Division Block 2 Knockview Buildings Ballymiscaw Stormont Belfast BT4 3SL</p>

	Telephone 028 9037 8617 Email foi@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/077
Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<p><i>CJ 4/5804 Former Captain Fred Holroyd (British Army): claims of unfair treatment by the Army</i></p> <p><i>This document has been retained by the Northern Ireland Office under section 3 (4) of the Public Records Act 1958. I request access to this document.</i></p>
Response	<p>I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does hold the information requested, however these files are to be withheld in full under section 23 or 24 of the Act in the alternative.</p> <p>Section 23(1), exempts information held by a public authority if it was directly or indirectly supplied to the public authority by, or relates to, any of the bodies specified in section 23(3) of the Act. Section 23 is an absolute exemption and, if it were engaged in this material, the department would not be required to consider whether the public interest favours disclosure of this information.</p> <p>Section 24 exempts information from disclosure if its exemption is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security. We cannot say which of the two exemptions is actually engaged, but to the extent that S24(1) might be engaged, we acknowledge the public interest in openness and transparency, but consider that there is a stronger public interest in protecting national security.</p> <p>Sections 23(1) and 24(1) are being cited in the alternative as it is not appropriate, in the circumstances of the case, to say which of the two exemptions is actually engaged so as not to undermine national security or reveal the extent of any involvement, or not, of the bodies dealing with security matters. Section 23 is an absolute exemption and, if it were engaged in this material, the NIO would not be required to consider whether the public interest favours disclosure of this information.</p> <p>Any information that is not exempt from disclosure under section 23(1) could be exempt under section 24(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, which exempts information from disclosure if its exemption is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security. We cannot say which of the two exemptions is actually engaged, but to the extent that S24(1) might be engaged, we acknowledge the public interest in openness and transparency, but consider that in the circumstances of this case and in the absence of any alternative countervailing factors there is a stronger public interest in protecting national security.</p>

Some material is also exempt from release under Section 27. Section 27(1) of the Act exempts information from disclosure if its release would be likely to harm international relations. The exemption is subject to a test of the balance of public interest. This means that, if information falls within the terms of the exemption, it is necessary to consider whether the public interest in all the circumstances of the particular case requires the information to be released or withheld. The information may only be withheld if the public interest in withholding outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

In deciding whether to disclose the information which is exempt under the legislation we have considered the following public interest reasons in favour of disclosing the information:

- greater transparency and openness can improve accountability and public trust; and
- to provide transparency over the meetings and activities of UK Government Ministers and officials in conducting government business.

We have balanced these arguments in favour of disclosure against other factors which support withholding the documentation:

- the need to ensure that HM Government is able to fully pursue the interests of the United Kingdom abroad; and
- that Ministers, officials and stakeholders should be able to engage in full and frank discussions with representatives of foreign governments.

For these reasons, we have concluded in this case that the harm that would result from disclosure of the exempt information outweighs the public interest arguments in favour of disclosure. It is essential that we are able to create a safe space to allow UK Government Ministers and officials to pursue the interests of the United Kingdom with representatives of foreign governments. Therefore we are satisfied that there continues to be strong public arguments against disclosure.

Finally we are not obliged, under section 40(2) of the Act, to provide information that is the personal information of another person if releasing would contravene any of the provisions in the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). In this instance we believe that the release of some of this information would contravene the first data protection principle and therefore section 40 (2) is engaged. The terms of this exemption in the Freedom of Information Act mean that we do not have to consider whether or not it would be in the public interest for you to have the information.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/080
Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, I request access to the following records and information:</i>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any policies, directives or guidance around the use of Internet Connection Records (ICRs), from November 2016 to the date this request is processed 2. How many times this organisation/department has requested access to ICRs 3. How many times this organisation/department has been successful in gaining access to ICRs 4. For what purpose each of the requests for ICRs was for (i.e., investigation into corruption, etc)
Response	<p>Your request has been interpreted as seeking information related to the acquisition of internet connection records (ICRs), a category of communications data, under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA). The Northern Ireland Office holds no records or information in response to questions 1-4.</p> <p><u>Further Information:</u> In relation to part one of your request, the draft Communications Data Code of Practice sets out guidance for the acquisition of communications data, including ICRs and can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/investigatory-powers-bill-codes-of-practice.</p> <p>The draft Code will undergo further revision before an updated version is published for public consultation.</p> <p>In relation to parts two to four of your request, Schedule 4 of the IPA [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/25/schedule/4] lists the relevant public authorities with communications data powers under the Act. The Northern Ireland Office does not appear in that list. More broadly, in relation to those public authorities who do appear in Schedule 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 4 of the IPA, which concerns the retention of communications data by communications service providers under a retention notice, was commenced on 30 December 2016. • Part 3 of the IPA, which concerns the acquisition of communications data by relevant public authorities, has yet to be commenced. <p>Finally, you may wish to note that the use of powers under the IPA are and will be subject to independent oversight by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner. The Commissioner has a mandate to audit and inspect compliance by public authorities and will report publicly on the use communications data powers.</p>
FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/081
Month Issued	July 2017

Request	<p><i>I have emailed the National Archives regarding nine documents which are listed on their catalogue but are still retained by a Government Department. They have informed me that these documents are held by the Northern Ireland Office and advised me to email yourselves with regards to requesting a review of the documents.</i></p> <p><i>The documents I would like to be able to view are as follows:</i></p> <p><i>CJ 4/2910</i> <i>CJ 4/4258</i> <i>CJ 4/4370</i> <i>CJ 4/4439</i> <i>CJ 4/4828</i> <i>CJ 4/5135</i> <i>CJ 4/5564</i> <i>CJ 4/5609</i> <i>CJ 4/5642</i></p>
Response	<p>I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does hold the information requested, however these files are to be withheld in full under section 23 or 24 of the Act in the alternative.</p> <p>Section 23(1), exempts information held by a public authority if it was directly or indirectly supplied to the public authority by, or relates to, any of the bodies specified in section 23(3) of the Act. Section 23 is an absolute exemption and, if it were engaged in this material, the department would not be required to consider whether the public interest favours disclosure of this information.</p> <p>Section 24 exempts information from disclosure if its exemption is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security. We cannot say which of the two exemptions is actually engaged, but to the extent that S24(1) might be engaged, we acknowledge the public interest in openness and transparency, but consider that there is a stronger public interest in protecting national security.</p> <p>Sections 23(1) and 24(1) are being cited in the alternative as it is not appropriate, in the circumstances of the case, to say which of the two exemptions is actually engaged so as not to undermine national security or reveal the extent of any involvement, or not, of the bodies dealing with security matters. Section 23 is an absolute exemption and, if it were engaged in this material, the NIO would not be required to consider whether the public interest favours disclosure of this information.</p>

Any information that is not exempt from disclosure under section 23(1) could be exempt under section 24(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, which exempts information from disclosure if its exemption is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security. We cannot say which of the two exemptions is actually engaged, but to the extent that S24(1) might be engaged, we acknowledge the public interest in openness and transparency, but consider that in the circumstances of this case and in the absence of any alternative countervailing factors there is a stronger public interest in protecting national security.

Some material is also exempt from release under Section 27. Section 27(1) of the Act exempts information from disclosure if its release would be likely to harm international relations. The exemption is subject to a test of the balance of public interest. This means that, if information falls within the terms of the exemption, it is necessary to consider whether the public interest in all the circumstances of the particular case requires the information to be released or withheld. The information may only be withheld if the public interest in withholding outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

In deciding whether to disclose the information which is exempt under the legislation we have considered the following public interest reasons in favour of disclosing the information:

- greater transparency and openness can improve accountability and public trust; and
- to provide transparency over the meetings and activities of UK Government Ministers and officials in conducting government business.

We have balanced these arguments in favour of disclosure against other factors which support withholding the documentation:

- the need to ensure that HM Government is able to fully pursue the interests of the United Kingdom abroad; and
- that Ministers, officials and stakeholders should be able to engage in full and frank discussions with representatives of foreign governments.

For these reasons, we have concluded in this case that the harm that would result from disclosure of the exempt information outweighs the public interest arguments in favour of disclosure. It is essential that we are able to create a safe space to allow UK Government Ministers and officials to pursue the interests of the United Kingdom with representatives of foreign governments. Therefore we are satisfied that there continues to be strong public arguments against disclosure.

Finally we are not obliged, under section 40(2) of the Act, to provide information that is the personal information of another person if releasing would contravene any of the provisions in the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). In this instance we believe that the release of some of this information would contravene the first data protection principle and therefore section 40 (2)

	is engaged. The terms of this exemption in the Freedom of Information Act mean that we do not have to consider whether or not it would be in the public interest for you to have the information.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/082
Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<p><i>I am writing to make a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Please can you provide me with a list of all advocacy correspondence sent by Prince Andrew or on Prince Andrew's behalf to ministers in the department between July 1, 2011 and today, June 16, 2017? Please include the name of the sender, the name of the recipient, and the date. Please include correspondence with former ministers, as well as current ministers.</i> <i>2. Please can you provide me with complete copies of each piece of correspondence listed in the answer to question 1?</i> <i>3. Please can you provide me with a list of all advocacy correspondence sent to Prince Andrew from ministers in the department between July 1, 2011 and today, June 16, 2017? Please include the name of the sender, the name of the recipient, and the date. As above, please include correspondence with former ministers, as well as current ministers.</i> <i>4. Please can you provide me with complete copies of each piece of correspondence listed in the answer to question 3?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>We have undertaken a search of our records and I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within the scope of your request.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/083
Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<p><i>I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from your office</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. I would like to know the total amount of money spent on flowers and decorative floral arrangements in the financial years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17.</i> <i>2. Please provide the expenditure incurred on behalf of your department by Government Hospitality in Lancaster House.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>In the period in question, I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office spent £0 on flowers and Decorative floral arrangements and that Government Hospitality in Lancaster House incurred £0 of expenditure on the Department's behalf.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/084
Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<p><i>Please treat this as a request under the Freedom of Information Act.</i></p> <p><i>Please include the statistics for 2014, 2015 and 2016.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How many Freedom of Information requests has this department received in the last three years?</i> • <i>How many Freedom of Information requests has this department returned in the last three years?</i> • <i>Please break this down by how many responses have been overdue by one month, two months, three months, six months and one year?</i> • <i>What is the longest amount of time it has taken to respond to a Freedom of Information request? Please state how long it took for the response to be returned.</i> • <i>How many times has the Information Commissioner's Office contacted this department regarding a late response in the last three years?</i> • <i>How many times has this department breached sections 1 and/or 10 of the Freedom of Information Act in the last three years?</i> • <i>How many times has the Information Commissioner made written certification to the High Court pursuant to section 54 of the Freedom of Information Act for this department in the last three years?</i> • <i>How many times has this department been in Contempt of Court from failure to return a Freedom of Information request in the last three years?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). The law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for.</p> <p>Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to specify a shorter timeframe for the request. Please note that, as in this instance, a refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit.</p> <p>You can find out more about Section 12(1) by reading the full text of the Act, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12.</p> <p>Freedom of Information statistical data is available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-foi-statistics. Any information held after March 2017 will be published in line with publication of National Statistics.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/085
Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<p><i>I wish to receive the following records from the Northern Ireland Office.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Correspondence dated between January 1st 2016 and present between the Northern Ireland Office and registered political parties regarding the Political Parties, Elections and Referendum Act 2000 and/or the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014, specifically correspondence pertaining to donors and lenders to Northern Ireland's political parties.</i> <i>Correspondence dated between January 1st 2016 and present between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and party leaders regarding the Political Parties, Elections and Referendum Act 2000 and/or the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014, specifically correspondence pertaining to donors and lenders to Northern Ireland's political parties.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>I can confirm that we do hold the information requested. Some of this information is contained within the attached letter from the Secretary of State to the leaders of the Northern Ireland parties on 3 July, letters from Naomi Long, Leader of the Alliance Party to the Secretary of State and the responses from the Secretary of State to Naomi Long. Some of the information contained within these letters is redacted as this information does not relate to your request.</p> <p>The remainder of the information held by Department in relation to your request is exempt from disclosure under Section 21 (Information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means). The information is available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/brokenshire-provides-further-details-of-political-donations-policy-to-mps</p> <p>You can find out more about Section 21 by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter.</p> <p><u>EXPLANATION OF FOIA - SECTION 21 – INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE BY OTHER MEANS</u></p> <p>We have provided below additional information about Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act. We have included some extracts from the legislation, as well as some of the guidance we use when applying it. We hope you find this information useful.</p> <p>The legislation</p>

Section 1: Right of Access to information held by public authorities

- (1) 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.

Section 21: Information accessible to applicant by other means

- (1) Information which is reasonably accessible to the applicant otherwise than under section 1
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1)—
- (a) information may be reasonably accessible to the applicant even though it is accessible only on payment, and
 - (b) information is to be taken to be reasonably accessible to the applicant if it is information which the public authority or any other person is obliged by or under any enactment to communicate (otherwise than by making the information available for inspection) to members of the public on request, whether free of charge or on payment.
- (3) For the purposes of subsection (1), information which is held by a public authority and does not fall within subsection (2)(b) is not to be regarded as reasonably accessible to the applicant merely because the information is available from the public authority itself on request, unless the information is made available in accordance with the authority's publication scheme and any payment required is specified in, or determined in accordance with, the scheme.

Guidance

Section 21 exempts information from the right of access under the Freedom of Information Act if that information is reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. Section 21 is aimed at preserving intact all existing laws providing access to information. The Freedom of Information Act is not designed to subsume other legal access rights, nor to give alternative routes of access where existing regimes are already available. The Freedom of Information Act access rights build on, but do not replace, previous access rights. Those existing rights, and the separate procedural regimes which are tailored to them, continue in place, and the Freedom of Information Act observes corresponding limits to its role.

Section 21 also confirms that the Freedom of Information Act does not provide alternative means of access to information which is already freely available, either through commercial publishing operations or through existing publicly funded provision. The Freedom of Information Act rights are designed to supplement, and not to duplicate, the usual flow of information to the public through the commercial electronic and print media, and through existing library and archive services.

	Section 21 is an absolute exemption, which means that no consideration of the public interest test is required to withhold information.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/087
Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<p><i>I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act.</i></p> <p><i>I am looking for information about payments to celebrities. Please could you provide me with the following:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Please could you provide a list of celebrities who have received payments over the past three calendar years (2015/16/17) up until the present date.</i> <i>2. In each case where a celebrity has been paid please could you state how much they were paid, the date they were paid and why they were paid (i.e. promotional campaign/advert, speaking fee, performing fee, appearance fee etc).</i> <i>3. In each case where a celebrity has been paid please could you include any expenses that were also paid and detail what they were for (travel, accommodation etc). Please could you break down what was paid to the celebrities in fees and what was paid to them in expenses.</i> <p><i>Please note, for the purpose of this request a 'celebrity' should be taken to mean a famous person in sport, entertainment, film, music, reality TV, vlogging, or any other field.</i></p> <p><i>If FOI requests of a similar nature have already been asked could you also please include your responses to those requests.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)</p> <p>The NIO does not hold any information that falls within the scope of your request.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/089
Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<p><i>I am writing to request information, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• How much food was procured for the catering operations for which your department has responsibility in (a) 2015-2016 (b) 2016-2017 in pounds.</i> <i>• What proportion (%) of that food procured in (a) 2015-2016 (b) 2016-2017 was UK produced.</i> <i>• Do you ensure the Government Buying Standards are adhered to?</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If so, how?</i> • <i>Do you have a policy in place for procuring UK produced food for your catering operations.</i> • <i>If so what is your policy?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much food was procured for the catering operations for which your department has responsibility in (a) 2015-2016 (b) 2016-2017 in pounds? <p>The law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for.</p> <p>To comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such material, officials would be required to open and read a large amount of records individually. You should not infer from this that the Northern Ireland Office holds a large amount of information relating to the subject you have asked about, only that we would need to search through a large amount of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request.</p> <p>You can find out more about Section 12(1) by reading the full text of the Act, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What proportion (%) of that food procured in (a) 2015-2016 (b) 2016-2017 was UK produced? • Do you ensure the Government Buying Standards are adhered to? • If so, how? <p>The Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within the scope of this request.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a policy in place for procuring UK produced food for your catering operations? • If so what is your policy? <p>The Northern Ireland Office does not have a policy in place for procuring UK produced food.</p>
FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/091

Month Issued	July 2017
Request	<p><i>I would like to submit a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</i></p> <p><i>I request answers to the following questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What was the department's total spending on recruitment during the financial year 2016/2017?</i> <i>2. How many vacancies for positions in the department were advertised in the same period?</i> <i>3. How many of these vacancies for positions were filled? How many were not filled?</i> <i>4. Which position took the longest time to fill, and how long did this position take to fill?</i> <i>5. Which position took the shortest time to fill, and how long did this position take to fill?</i> <i>6. What was the average time to fill vacancies for positions in the department during the financial year 2016/17?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The responses to your questions are set out below in the order they were asked.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The NIO did not spend any money on recruiting agencies in the 2016-17 financial year. Information on the internal cost of recruitment is not held. 2. The number of vacancies advertised in 2016-17 was 80 3. 59 vacancies were filled and 21 were not filled 4. Information regarding questions 4-6 is not held.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/073
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>I have some FOI questions for the Northern Ireland Office, which can be found below.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Is the expense process at your department paper-based (e.g. do staff have to physically) submit paper receipts?</i> <i>• Is the expense process at your department spreadsheet (e.g.: Excel) based?</i> <i>• How many people are required to sign off a member of staff's expenses at your department?</i>
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the expense process at your department paper-based (e.g. do staff have to physically) submit paper receipts? <p>The expense process carried out using our computerised financial accounting system with receipts being copied for backup purposes however the hard copy receipts are retained by the Finance team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the expense process at your department spreadsheet (e.g.: Excel) based? <p>No</p>

- **How many people are required to sign off a member of staff's expenses at your department?**
One person (additional to the claimant) is required to sign off a staff member's expenses claim.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/078
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<i>Under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, I would be grateful if you could give me information about the current newly elected 10 Democratic Unionist Party MPs, with regard to their past/present connections with the Ulster Defence Association; and with other Loyalist paramilitary groups</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). On this occasion we are unable to take your request any further. This is because the cost of complying with your request would exceed the limit set by the Freedom of Information Act.</p> <p>This response does warrant some further explanation. The search facility of our records management software is unable to comply with your request as it can only pick up words in the title of records as opposed to the text of the documents. To comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such material, officials would be required to open and read a large number of records individually - in effect, it would be necessary to trawl through every document, e-mail and file with the name of a current DUP MP in the title. As I am sure you can appreciate, given the fact that our records go back to 1972 and one of the names we would need to search is 'Paisley', this would be a very significant number of documents. You should not infer from this that the Department holds a large amount or indeed any information relating to the subject you have asked about, only that we would need to search through a large number of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request.</p> <p>The law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for. You can find out more about Section 12(2) by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12.</p> <p><u>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SECTION 12(2)</u></p> <p>We have provided below additional information about Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act. We have included some extracts from the legislation, as well as some of the guidance we use when applying it. We hope you find this information useful.</p>

The legislation

Section 1: Right of Access to information held by public authorities

- (1) 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.

Section 12: Cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

- (1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.
- (3) In subsections (1) and (2) “the appropriate limit” means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.
- (4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority—
 - (a) by one person, or
 - (b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign, the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.
- (5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.

Guidance

The appropriate limit

The 'appropriate limit', for the purposes of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act and section 9A of the Data Protection Act, has been set at:

- £600 for central government and Parliament
- The hourly rate is set at £25 per person per hour.

	<p>The following activities may be taken into account when public authorities are estimating whether the appropriate limit has been exceeded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determining whether it holds the information requested • locating the information or documents containing the information • retrieving such information or documents • extracting the information from the document containing it.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/092
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>I am writing under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from the Northern Ireland Office:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Has the department compiled a risk register to assess and manage the risks arising from Britain's exit from the European Union?</i> • <i>If such a document exists, please provide us with both paper and electronic copies of this information.</i>
Response	<p>I can confirm the department holds information relating to your request. However, after careful consideration we have decided that the information is exempt from disclosure under the following sections of FOIA:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Section 27(1) – prejudice to international relations 2. Section 29(1) – the economy 3. Section 35(1) – formulation of government policy <p><u>Section 27</u></p> <p>Some of the information held is exempt under section 27(1), meaning that disclosure of this would or would be likely to prejudice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relations between the United Kingdom and any other state • relations between the United Kingdom and any other international organisation or international court • the interests of the United Kingdom abroad • the promotion or protection by the United Kingdom of its interests abroad. <p>Section 27(1) is a qualified exemption and as such we have considered whether the balance would lie in favour of the public interest for us to provide you with the information. I have outlined our public interest considerations below:</p>

There is a strong public interest in transparency and accountability to promote public understanding in relation to the work between this government and that of other countries in respect of issues related to EU Exit. There is also public interest in ensuring that the UK's interests are protected abroad, and that these and subsequent relations with other countries are not prejudiced.

Negotiations regarding the UK's exit from the EU have just commenced. There is high public interest therefore in understanding what risks are considered to be important by the Government and may be raised in forthcoming discussions with the EU.

However, disclosure of any information relating to potential risks while there are live negotiations ongoing might prejudice the outcome of those negotiations and subsequently result in damage to the United Kingdom's objectives or its relations with other states and international organisations.

As a result we consider the public interest balance lies in withholding the information under section 27 (1) of the Act.

Section 29

Some of the information held is exempt under section 29(1), meaning that disclosure of this would or would be likely to prejudice:

- the economic interests of the UK or any part of it, or
- the financial interests of any administration in the UK.

Section 29(1) is a qualified exemption and as such we have considered whether the balance would lie in favour of the public interest for us to provide you with the information. I have outlined our public interest considerations below:

There is a strong public interest in transparency and accountability to promote public understanding in relation to the work of government in respect of EU Exit. We realise that the public have an expectation that those who work in the public sector and those in Government should be accountable for decisions made in their name and at the taxpayers' expense.

Negotiations regarding the UK's exit from the EU have just commenced. There is high public interest therefore in understanding what risks are considered to be important by the Government and may be raised in forthcoming discussions with the EU.

However, disclosure of any information relating to potential risks might prejudice the outcome of those negotiations and subsequently result in damage to the economic interests of the UK.

We reached the view that, on balance, the public interest is better served by withholding this information under Section 29(1) of the Act.

Section 35

Some of the information held by the department relates to the formulation or development of government policy (section 35(1) (a) of the Act).

Section 35(1) (a) is a qualified exemption and as such we have considered whether the balance would lie in favour of the public interest for us to provide you with the information. I have outlined our public interest considerations below:

There is a strong public interest in transparency and accountability to promote public understanding in relation to the work of government in respect of EU Exit. We realise that the public have an expectation that those who work in the public sector and those in Government should be accountable for decisions made in their name and at the taxpayers' expense. There is also a public interest in allowing for Ministers to be provided with well informed and balanced advice to make effective decisions, and that the department makes best use of public resources.

However, effective policy development requires time and space to allow a proper consideration of all options, objectively, and away from external speculation. This approach helps to ensure that appropriate decisions can be made and serves to uphold the integrity of the policy making process. The government's policy in relation to EU Exit is still in development and subject to careful and sensitive consideration, given the current negotiation process.

Disclosing policy options that are being considered in relation to EU Exit before they are agreed could undermine decision-making and the UK's position as we embark upon negotiations to leave the EU. For example, this could result in a false or misleading impression being formed over what issues have been assessed to be most important or given most focus by the UK Government, which could ultimately make it more difficult for the Government to implement the most effective policies in the public interest.

As a result we consider the balance of public interest lies with withholding the information under section 35(1) (a) of the Act.

FOI Request Reference

FOI/17/093

Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<i>Under Freedom of Information legislation please provide me with all correspondence including emails, letters, memos, minutes of meeting, briefing documents, research or reviews from April, May, June 2017 held by the Northern Ireland Office that refer to the issue of political party donations in Northern Ireland. If this time period is still too long to comply with time and cost exemptions please provide me with the information for June 2017 only</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). The law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for.</p> <p>In this instance the search facility of our records management software is unable to comply with your request as it can only pick up words in the title of records as opposed to the text of the documents. To comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such material, officials would be required to open and read a large amount of records individually.</p> <p>You should not infer from this that the Northern Ireland Office holds a large amount of information relating to the subjects you have asked about, only that we would need to search through a large amount of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request.</p> <p>You can find out more about Section 12(1) by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12.</p> <p>Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. As we have already advised, you may wish to consider for example providing a series of key phrases for us to search, accepting that this would only capture where that phrase appears in the title. You might also wish to specify a shorter timeframe for the request. Please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit.</p> <p><u>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SECTION 12(1)</u></p> <p>We have provided below additional information about Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act. We have included some extracts from the legislation, as well as some of the guidance we use when applying it. We hope you find this information useful.</p>

The legislation

Section 1: Right of Access to information held by public authorities

- (1) 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.

Section 12: Cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

- (1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.
- (3) In subsections (1) and (2) “the appropriate limit” means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.
- (4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority—
 - (a) by one person, or
 - (b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign, the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.
- (5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.

Guidance

The appropriate limit

The 'appropriate limit', for the purposes of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act and section 9A of the Data Protection Act, has been set at:

- £600 for central government and Parliament
- The hourly rate is set at £25 per person per hour.

	<p>The following activities may be taken into account when public authorities are estimating whether the appropriate limit has been exceeded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determining whether it holds the information requested • locating the information or documents containing the information • retrieving such information or documents • extracting the information from the document containing it.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/094
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from your IT Department.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Which IT Service Management (ITSM) solutions are currently being used by your organisation in their IT operations and Service Desk functions.</i> <i>2. How much did the organisation spend on this solution? (Please provide initial setup / deployment costs and ongoing costs)</i> <i>3. Which company did your organisation procure the current solution from and by which method? (i.e. Direct Award / Tender etc.)</i> <i>4. When does the current ITSM solution contract expire?</i> <i>5. Who in the organisation is responsible for deciding which ITSM tool is used? (Please provide name and job title)</i>
Response	<p>The Northern Ireland Office received managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance and Personnel, Northern Ireland. 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</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/097
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>Since the Secretary of State has already issued his statement to the House (3rd July 2017), I request under the Freedom of Information Act that you now forward copies of all the letters received by the NIO/ Secretary of State from all the NI political parties containing their responses to his request regarding political decisions nations</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)</p>

I can confirm that we do hold the information requested, however this information is exempt under Section 21 (Information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means). The information is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/brookshire-provides-further-details-of-political-donations-policy-to-mps>

You can find out more about Section 21 by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter.

EXPLANATION OF FOIA - SECTION 21 – INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE BY OTHER MEANS

We have provided below additional information about Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act. We have included some extracts from the legislation, as well as some of the guidance we use when applying it. We hope you find this information useful.

The legislation

Section 1: Right of Access to information held by public authorities

- (1) 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.

Section 21: Information accessible to applicant by other means

- (1) Information which is reasonably accessible to the applicant otherwise than under section 1
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1)—
 - (a) information may be reasonably accessible to the applicant even though it is accessible only on payment, and
 - (b) information is to be taken to be reasonably accessible to the applicant if it is information which the public authority or any other person is obliged by or under any enactment to communicate (otherwise than by making the information available for inspection) to members of the public on request, whether free of charge or on payment.
- (3) For the purposes of subsection (1), information which is held by a public authority and does not fall within subsection (2)(b) is not to be regarded as reasonably accessible to the applicant merely because the information is available from the public authority itself on request, unless the information is made available in accordance with the authority's publication scheme and any payment required is specified in, or determined in accordance with, the scheme.

Guidance

	<p>Section 21 exempts information from the right of access under the Freedom of Information Act if that information is reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. Section 21 is aimed at preserving intact all existing laws providing access to information. The Freedom of Information Act is not designed to subsume other legal access rights, nor to give alternative routes of access where existing regimes are already available. The Freedom of Information Act access rights build on, but do not replace, previous access rights. Those existing rights, and the separate procedural regimes which are tailored to them, continue in place, and the Freedom of Information Act observes corresponding limits to its role.</p> <p>Section 21 also confirms that the Freedom of Information Act does not provide alternative means of access to information which is already freely available, either through commercial publishing operations or through existing publicly funded provision. The Freedom of Information Act rights are designed to supplement, and not to duplicate, the usual flow of information to the public through the commercial electronic and print media, and through existing library and archive services.</p> <p>Section 21 is an absolute exemption, which means that no consideration of the public interest test is required to withhold information.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/098
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, please list/provide me with:</i></p> <p><i>a) the number of all secondments from the Department (including any associated agencies and NDPBs) to outside of Government since July 2012 and,</i></p> <p><i>b) from outside Government into the department (including any associated agencies and NDPBs) since July 2012,</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>a) There have been no secondments from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) to outside of government since July 2012</p> <p>b) There have been no secondments from outside Government into the NIO since July 2012</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/099
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>On 2nd May 2014 the then Northern Ireland Secretary Theresa Villiers stated in the House of Commons in response to a question from Kate Hoey MP on the subject of Royal Prerogatives of Mercy that there were no figures available for RPM's</i></p>

	<p><i>issued to offenders in Northern Ireland between 1987 and 1997 as they not only were non gazetted in the usual manner but the figures had been lost.</i></p> <p><i>At that time an NIO spokeswoman stated, "On the records for 1987 to 1998, we are conducting an urgent search of the historical records and correspondence relating to RPMs during this period."</i></p> <p><i>Please can you provide me with the number of non-gazetted lost RPM's that have been located to date?</i></p>
Response	<p>The department has carried out further searches of files and has found a number of documents which provide the names of individuals who were granted the Royal Prerogative of Mercy between 1987 and 1997.</p> <p>An extensive search of our records in 2014 identified 53 cases where individuals were, or may have been, granted the Royal Prerogative of Mercy. However, please note that these may not be the complete records for that period.</p> <p>You may also wish to note that there is no statutory requirement for publication in the Gazette, of the use of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy.</p>
FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/100
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>I would like to receive copies of all correspondence dated between June 20 and July 5, 2017, within the NI Office (including the Secretary of State, and between the NIO and/ or Secretary of State and any other agency, individual or political party, which relates to the decision not to backdate the publication of donors to political parties, and/or to limit it to donations from July 1, 2017.</i></p> <p><i>This correspondence would be in any form including, but not exclusive to, memos, text messages, reports, emails, letters, minutes of meetings etc.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). The law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for.</p> <p>In this instance the search facility of our records management software is unable to comply with your request as it can only pick up words in the title of records as opposed to the text of the documents. To comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such material, officials would be required to open and read a large amount of records individually.</p>

You should not infer from this that the Northern Ireland Office holds a large amount of information relating to the subjects you have asked about, only that we would need to search through a large amount of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request.

You can find out more about Section 12(1) by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12>.

Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a refined request within the cost limit. As we have already advised, you may wish to consider for example providing a series of key phrases for us to search, accepting that this would only capture where that phrase appears in the title. You might also wish to specify a shorter timeframe for the request. Please note that, as in this instance, a refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SECTION 12(1)

We have provided below additional information about Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act. We have included some extracts from the legislation, as well as some of the guidance we use when applying it. We hope you find this information useful.

The legislation

Section 1: Right of Access to information held by public authorities

- (1) 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.

Section 12: Cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

- (1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.

- (3) In subsections (1) and (2) “the appropriate limit” means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.
- (4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority—
- (a) by one person, or
 - (b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign, the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.
- (5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.

Guidance

The appropriate limit

The 'appropriate limit', for the purposes of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act and section 9A of the Data Protection Act, has been set at:

- £600 for central government and Parliament
- The hourly rate is set at £25 per person per hour.

The following activities may be taken into account when public authorities are estimating whether the appropriate limit has been exceeded.

- determining whether it holds the information requested
- locating the information or documents containing the information
- retrieving such information or documents
- extracting the information from the document containing it.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/101
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>Please can you provide me with the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>A list of vehicles owned or leased to the department. Please include; registration mark, fleet number (if used), make & model and body type.</i> 2. <i>Of the vehicles leased, a list of the companies from which the vehicles are leased.</i>

Response

I can confirm that the department leases one vehicle. The department holds the additional information that you have asked for, however as section 38 of the FOIA is engaged it is exempt from disclosure. We are not obliged to provide information if its release would be likely to endanger the health and safety of any individual.

Public interest considerations favouring disclosure

- Provide the public with increased transparency around the vehicle leasing process.
- Revealing the information would allow the public to be assured that the vehicle leasing process is carried out effectively and that the public interest has been maintained and safeguarded.
- Greater transparency makes government departments more accountable and increases public trust and scrutiny.

Public interest considerations favouring withholding the information

- Disclosure of vehicle details would endanger the personal safety of any individual who may make use of a vehicle.
- Disclosure of vehicle leasing companies would endanger the personal safety of any individual employed by the department or any vehicle leasing company.

In this case, we have concluded that the public interest favours withholding the information

You can find out more about Section 38 by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/38>

EXPLANATION OF FOIA - SECTION 38 – HEALTH AND SAFETY

We have provided below additional information about Section 38 of the Freedom of Information Act. We have included some extracts from the legislation, as well as some of the guidance we use when applying it. We hope you find this information useful.

The legislation**Section 1: Right of Access to information held by public authorities**

- (1) 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.

Section 38: Health and safety.

(1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to-

- (a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or
- (b) endanger the safety of any individual.

(2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would, or would be likely to, have either of the effects mentioned in subsection (1).

Guidance

Section 38 applies to information that if disclosed would be likely to put the physical or mental health or the safety of any individual at risk or greater risk. The individual does not need to be identifiable and may be a member of the public, where the danger is to the health or safety of the public at large. The exemption can apply equally to a group or class of people who could have their health and safety adversely affected by disclosure.

An act of disclosure may cause mental harm directly – for example resulting in a sufficient level of shock or distress as to endanger an individual’s future mental well-being.

There are many different ways in which disclosure of information could endanger someone's health or safety either directly or indirectly. The following are some examples of such disclosures:

- those which would allow individuals, groups or firms to be identified or located and consequently targeted and attacked for their beliefs or practices, including work in controversial scientific areas;
- disclosure of plans and policies relating to the accommodation of individuals, or groups of individuals, where disclosure could lead to their being threatened or harassed (for example, asylum seekers)
- disclosing information about negotiations with kidnappers, where disclosure could endanger the safety of hostages
- information relating to the protection of the Critical National Infrastructure, such as the water supply, national grid, or gas supply from actions intended to cause catastrophic damage and/or cause death or serious injury
- information relating to the identity of informers or undercover officers
- disclosure which may have an adverse effect on public health
- the disclosure of sensitive or graphic information about deceased individuals which could cause serious distress to others such as family members, particularly if they were not previously aware of it.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/102
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>Freedom of Information request: Proposed language(s) act for Northern Ireland</i></p> <p>(1) <i>Irish (Gaelic) Language Act</i></p> <p>(a) <i>The key provisions which parties favouring free standing Irish language legislation would wish to see included in the proposed Act.</i></p> <p>(b) <i>Their estimates (if any) of the related set up and annual running costs.</i></p> <p>(c) <i>Their proposals, if any, as to how such costs should be funded.</i></p> <p>(2) <i>Language (plural) Act</i></p> <p>(a) <i>The favoured key provisions to be included in any such, more comprehensive, Act.</i></p> <p>(b) <i>The proposed, if any, sources of funding.</i></p> <p>(c) <i>The proposed, if any, sources of funding.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>It is for the parties favouring free-standing Irish language legislation to set out what they would wish to see in a proposed Irish (Gaelic) Language or Languages Act.</p> <p>Sinn Fein have been one of the main proponents of this legislation and have set out some detail on this matter on their website - www.sinnfein.ie/equal-rights-for-irish-speakers</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/103
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>I would be grateful if your office would forward me a copy of all papers between NIO/NICS and NIPSA regarding the Grade C Assessment/People Exercise which took place c.2011/12. These papers should include a copy of the final agreement between NIO/NICS and NIPSA regarding the Assessment/Exercise.</i></p> <p><i>Please also include a copy of the Notice and accompanying literature issued to all staff eligible to apply for the exercise/assessment referred to above.</i></p>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

	<p>Attached are all papers held by the NIO regarding the Grade C Assessment/ People Exercise as requested.</p> <p>You should note that this matter was dealt with by the Northern Ireland Civil Service, not the Northern Ireland Office, so you may wish to contact them if you require any further information.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/104
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>I am requesting under the Freedom of Information Act to receive a copy of any internal report, inquiry or briefing circulated to Senior Civil Service members (SCS Pay Bands 1, 2 or 3) or ministers at your organisation during 2016 or 2017 to date containing the words 'secret', 'classified', 'confidential' or 'restricted'. Any such documents should be considered within the scope of this request whether the above words are in cover pages, the body of the text or watermarked on the document. I remind you that designating reports by such terms carries no legal force and does not confer automatic exemption from the act. I trust that it will be a quick and simple matter to search for these words and should be easily achievable within cost limits stipulated by the act.</i></p>
Response	<p>I can confirm that the Department holds some of the information that you have requested. However, because the cost of complying with your request would exceed the limit set by the Freedom of Information Act, on this occasion I'm afraid I will not be taking your request further. Furthermore, the search facility of our records management software is unable to comply with your request as it can only pick up words in the title of records as opposed to the text of the documents or watermarks on the document. To comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such material, officials would therefore be required to open and read a large amount of records individually - in effect, it would be necessary to trawl through all correspondence to identify copies of any internal report, inquiry or briefing circulated to Senior Civil Service members (SCS Pay Bands 1, 2 or 3) or ministers in the Northern Ireland Office during 2016 or 2017 to date containing the words 'secret', 'classified', 'confidential' or 'restricted'. As I am sure you can appreciate this would be a very significant number of documents.</p> <p>You should not infer from this that the Department holds a large amount of information relating to the subjects you have asked about, only that we would need to search through a large amount of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request.</p> <p>The law allows us to decline to answer requests under s12 of the FOIA when we estimate that it would cost us more than £600 to identify, locate, extract, and then provide the information that has been asked for. There are only certain activities that we can take into account when making this calculation, but you may be interested to know that the limit is equivalent to 3½ working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour.</p>

White										
Black or Black British										
Asian or Asian British										
Chinese										
Mixed										
Unspecified										
Disability										
Candidates identified themselves as disabled										
Unspecified										
Sexual Orientation										
Candidates identified themselves as Heterosexual										
Candidates who identified themselves as LGBTQ, i.e. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning.										
Unspecified										

Executive Search & Recruitment Consultants

Please provide details of executive search consultants used to recruit Senior Level executives (grade SCS1 and above) in your department; the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals recruited as a results and annual spend on each agency for 2015, 2016 & 2017.

	Number of Senior Level Executives recruited at grade SCS1 and above?	How many of these candidates were BAME individuals?	Expenditure with Executive Search Consultants & In-House (£)

Executive Recruitment Consultants	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
In-house (<i>direct recruitment only</i>)									
In-house (<i>Civil Service Resourcing</i>)									
Egon Zehnder									
Fortune Hill									
Gatenby Sanderson									
Greenpark									
Harvey Nash									
Hays									
Korn Ferry									
Michael Page									
Morgan Hunt									
Novo Executive Search									
Penna									
Odgers Berndtson									
Saxton Bamfylde									
Veredus									
Other. <i>Please specify below:</i>									

Diversity & Inclusion

Description	2015	2016	2017
<i>How often were diversity and inclusion issues discussed by the Permanent Secretary and members of the Executive team within your department in 2015, 2016 and 2017?</i>			
<i>Number of occasions? Please provides dates if possible.</i>			
<i>Length of discussion (in minutes)</i>			

Does your department publish minutes of board meetings?

- If yes, can you provide minutes where diversity and inclusion was discussed by the ministerial team and the Executive team in 2015, 2016 and 2017. (Please send minutes as attachments or provide links to minutes below.)*

- *If no, when you do envisage the department publishing minutes of meetings as per ICO guidance under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)? Please provide a date*

Employment Tribunals

Description	2015	2016	2017
Please can you state the number of discrimination and harassment complaints received from employees by your department for protected characteristics, as defined under Equality Act (2010).			
How many of these complaints were resolved in-house?			
How many of these complaints were taken to an Employment Tribunal?			
How many of these complaints were taken beyond a Tribunal?			
Expenditure of your department in defending cases at Employment Tribunals and in court (<i>including the cost of internal and external legal representation</i>).			
Expenditure on settling the cases outside of a Tribunal or court (<i>including the cost of internal and external legal representation</i>).			

Response

I can confirm that the Department holds some of the information that you have requested.

The Northern Ireland Office does not use external recruitment consultants and receives all recruitment services from Civil Service Resourcing when recruiting Senior Civil Servants. Some of the information requested in the first two pages of your table may be available from Civil Service Resourcing, whom you may wish to approach with your request.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/civil-service-resourcing>

I can confirm that gender information for Senior Civil Servants in the Northern Ireland Office is published in our Annual Report and Accounts which can be accessed at www.nio.gov.uk

Diversity and inclusion issues have been discussed once each year at Permanent Secretary and Executive management level as follows:

- September 2015
- March 2016

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2017 <p>The length of the discussions is not recorded.</p> <p>No formal discrimination or harassment complaints were received in 2015, 2016 or 2017.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/106
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>I want to submit a freedom of information request for the following information relating to Fixed Telecommunications and Internet Services:</i></p> <p><i>I have sent this request before but some of the contract have now expired can you please send me an update.</i></p> <p><i>If there is more than one supplier for each of the contract information I am requesting below please can you split each contract individually and not combined. Please also separate the expiry data and spend and number of lines for each supplier. An example of this can be viewed at the bottom of this request.</i></p> <p><i>Contract 1</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Current Fixed Line (Voice Circuits) Provider- Supplier's name, if there is not information available please can you provide further insight into why?</i> <i>2. Fixed Line- Contract Renewal Date- please provide day, month and year (month and year is also acceptable). If this is a rolling contract please provide me with the rolling date of the contract. If there is more than one supplier please split the renewal dates up into however many suppliers</i> <i>3. Fixed Line- Contract Duration- the number of years the contract is for each</i> <i>4. Type of Lines- Please can you split the type of lines per each supplier? PTSN, Analogue, SIP</i> <i>5. Number of Lines- Please can you split the number of lines per each supplier? SIP trunks, PSN Lines, Analogue Lines</i> <p><i>Contract 2</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>6. Minutes/Landline Provider- Supplier's name (NOT Mobiles) if there is not information available please can you provide further insight into why?</i> <i>7. Minutes/Landline Contract Renewal Date- please provide day, month and year (month and year is also acceptable). If this is a rolling contract please provide me with the rolling date of the contract.</i> <i>8. Minutes Landline Monthly Spend- Monthly average spend. An estimate or average is acceptable.</i> <i>9. Minute's Landlines Contract Duration: the number of years the contract is with the supplier.</i>

10. *Number of Extensions- Please state the number of telephone extensions the organisation currently has. An estimate or average is acceptable.*

Contract 3

11. *Fixed Broadband Provider- Supplier's name if there is not information available please can you provide further insight into why?*

12. *Fixed Broadband Renewal Date- please provide day, month and year (month and year is also acceptable). If this is a rolling contract please provide me with the rolling date of the contract. If there is more than one supplier please split the renewal dates up into however many suppliers*

13. *Fixed Broadband Annual Average Spend- Annual average spend for each broadband provider. An estimate or average is acceptable.*

14. *VOIP/PBX Installation Date of the organisation's primary telephone system: - please provide day, month and year (month and year is also acceptable).*

Contract 4

15. *WAN Provider- please provide me with the main supplier(s) if there is not information available please can you provide further insight into why?*

16. *WAN Contract Renewal Date- please provide day, month and year (month and year is also acceptable). If this is a rolling contract please provide me with the rolling date of the contract. If there is more than one supplier please split the renewal dates up into however many suppliers*

17. *Contract Description: Please can you provide me with a brief description of the contract*

18. *Number of sites: Please state the number of sites the WAN covers. Approx. will do.*

19. *WAN Annual Average Spend- Annual average spend for each WAN provider. An estimate or average is acceptable.*

20. *Internal Contact: please can you send me there full contact details including contact number and email and job title.*

If your organisation has a managed services contract which includes all or two out of three of the services stated above please state which of these is included with the contract. It would also be for me to if there are any other service support areas that are included within these contracts.

Managed Service Contract

- *Number of Extensions*
- *Type of Lines*
- *Number of Lines*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Minutes Landline Monthly Average Spend</i> • <i>Fixed Broadband Average Annual Spend</i> • <i>WAN Average Annual Spend</i> <p><i>Internal Contact: please can you send me there full contact details including contact number and email and job title. If there is more than one supplier for each contract please can you separate the contract dates and spend for each supplier. Also if no information can be provided for each of the key data types please explain why there is no information.</i></p>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office received managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance and Personnel, Northern Ireland. 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

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/107
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>How many illegal immigrants have you employed since 2012? If any, please break down the number by years i.e. 2012, 2013, 2014 and so on. For clarification by employed I mean anyone paid to work on a full-time, part-time, freelance, staff, sub-contractor or consultant basis.</i></p> <p><i>Of those people, if any, please provide where possible the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nationality</i> • <i>Position held/work employed to do</i> • <i>Length of employment</i>
Response	As far as we are aware the Northern Ireland Office has not employed any illegal immigrants since 2012 or indeed at all.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/108
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>I am interested in obtaining information relating to the supply of a Managed Print Service and associated elements to the Northern Ireland Office.</i></p> <p><i>Specifically, if you are able to answer the following questions I would be grateful.</i></p> <p><i>1) Who is currently contracted to supply Multifunction Devices (MFDs), or similar products such as photocopiers and printers to your organisation?</i></p>

	<p>2) <i>What is the duration of that contract and when does it end?</i></p> <p>3) <i>What is the total value of that contract over the term? Please include hardware, management and service charges.</i></p> <p>4) <i>How many related hardware devices are currently deployed across your organisation?</i></p> <p>5) <i>What, if any, software solution is utilised in conjunction with the hardware?</i></p> <p>6) <i>Under what route to market (CCS, OJEU etc) is that contract purchased?</i></p> <p>7) <i>Is a third-party Systems Integrator a part of the management of that contract, and if applicable, who is that?</i></p> <p>8) <i>Does your organisation utilise an Enterprise Content Management application for managing documents and workflow? Please supply details if applicable.</i></p> <p>9) <i>Does your organisation have an on-site reprographics function? Is this outsourced? If so please provide details of contract length, supplier and total value?</i></p>
Response	<p>The Northern Ireland Office received managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance and Personnel, Northern Ireland. 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</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/109
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>I request information relating to the legal obligations of the NIO to provide compensation for loss suffered as a result of malicious or wanton damage to public and/or private property caused by or arising out of the activities of an unlawful assembly of three or more people, as provided for under the Criminal Damage (Compensation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.</i></p> <p><i>If no such legal obligations exist, please provide confirmation that this is the case.</i></p> <p><i>Please also provide the following for each year from 2012-2017:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The number of claims made of the NIO under this or other legislation that relate to damage caused by bonfires.</i> • <i>Any information relating to the damage caused and the decision taken by the NIO, including what compensation was awarded if any (financial or otherwise). Where data is unavailable for any period of time during the relevant period, please explain why such data is not held.</i>
Response	<p>The Criminal Damage (Compensation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 provides a right to claim compensation from the Department of Justice for loss suffered as a result of malicious or wanton damage to agricultural or charitable property and, in the case of other property, as a result of damage caused by an unlawful assembly of three or more persons or by terrorist acts. As the provision to claim compensation rests with the Department of Justice, the NIO does not hold the information you</p>

have requested. Applications for compensation and requests for further information or advice about the scheme should therefore be made to foi@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/110
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>I wish to submit a new FOI request for access to the following records:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Notes and/or minutes of meetings and/or logs and notes of phone calls held between January 1 2017 and present between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and party leaders of registered Northern Irish political parties regarding the Political Parties, Elections and Referendum Act 2000 and/or the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014, specifically correspondence pertaining to donors and lenders to Northern Ireland's political parties</i> <i>Records and correspondence dated from January 1 2017 onwards pertaining to the choice of date on which the new arrangements will apply (i.e. "donations and loans received on or after 1 July 2017").</i>
Response	<p>Your follow up emails dated 16 August 2017 in which you refined your request to remove notes of phone calls and clarified the second part of your request are also acknowledged.</p> <p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). The law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for.</p> <p>To comply with your request and to enable us to identify relevant material, officials would be required to open and read a large amount of records individually. A request for records and correspondence over a period of time is often likely to lead to a response under Section (12)1 of the FOIA as any subject may have numerous officials involved; and with search facilities as powerful as they now are, searches frequently give a very large number of results, many of which are false positives but would have to be assessed. We have discussed at length in the NIO how we could advise you to refine your request and we have tried searching in different ways, but in each case we have either still had too many results or clearly narrowed too far giving misleading results.</p> <p>You may wish to submit a further refined request however in this case we consider that any repeat of the question may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit leading to a further response under Section 12(1). We appreciate that this is a disappointing result and are sorry that on this occasion we have not been able to answer your request. You can find out more about Section 12(1) by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at</p>

	the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12 .
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/111
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request copies of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• The total figure your department has spent on consultancy services since 1 June 2016, with a breakdown by consultancy, time, and subject where it is available.</i> <i>• The total figure your department has spent on consultancy services on the issue of Brexit since 1 June 2016, with a breakdown by consultancy, time, and subject where it is available.</i>
Response	<p>The Department has spent £27,745 on consultancy services since 1 June 2016. None of this expenditure has related to the issue of Brexit. However, because the cost of complying with the remainder of your request would exceed the limit set by the Freedom of Information Act, on this occasion I'm afraid I will not be taking your request further.</p> <p>The law allows us to decline to answer requests under s12 of the FOIA when we estimate that it would cost us more than £600 to identify, locate, extract, and then provide the information that has been asked for. There are only certain activities that we can take into account when making this calculation, but you may be interested to know that the limit is equivalent to 3½ working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour.</p> <p>The Department does not hold information for spend on consultancy in the detail that you have requested. It is therefore not possible to supply this information at this time as in order to comply with this request the Department would need manually review all expenditure in relation to consultancy and request back up from the relevant organisations in the format that you have requested.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/112
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>This is a Freedom of Information request about secondments into your department.</i></p> <p><i>I am making this request because I believe it is in the public interest in understanding for the number and nature of agreements that facilitate the exchange of skills and expertise between government and other commercial and social organisations. I also believe there is a public interest in understanding how conflicts of interest are managed.</i></p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please state how many people are currently on secondment. For each current secondment, please state: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) civil service seniority level b) job title c) organisation seconded from d) date commenced 2. Please state how many secondments concluded since 1 January 2016. For each concluded secondment, please state: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) civil service seniority level b) job title c) organisation seconded from d) date commenced e) date finished 3. Please state the name and purpose of each form that is completed by the department and/or the secondee during the process of declaring and manning conflicts.
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Office has no staff seconded from or to any commercial or social organisation.</p>
FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/113
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request copies of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The total figure your department has spent on advertising since 1 June 2016, with a breakdown by area and medium where possible.</i>
Response	<p>I can confirm that the Department holds some of the information that you have requested. However, because the cost of complying with your request would exceed the limit set by the Freedom of Information Act, on this occasion I'm afraid I will not be taking your request further.</p> <p>The law allows us to decline to answer requests under s12 of the FOIA when we estimate that it would cost us more than £600 to identify, locate, extract, and then provide the information that has been asked for. There are only certain activities that we</p>

	<p>can take into account when making this calculation, but you may be interested to know that the limit is equivalent to 3½ working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour.</p> <p>The Department does not hold information for spend on advertising in the detail that you have requested. It is therefore not possible to supply this information at this time as in order to comply with this request the Department would need manually review all expenditure in relation to consultancy and request back up from the relevant organisations in the format that you have requested.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/114
Month Issued	August 2017
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request copies of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The total number of individuals employed by your department that are EU nationals and the total number of those individuals that do not have permanent residence rights in the UK.</i>
Response	<p>I can confirm that the Department does not hold any information falling within the scope of your request.</p> <p>All Government Departments are bound by legal requirements concerning the right to work in the UK and, in addition, the Civil Service Nationality Rules.</p> <p>Evidence of nationality is checked at the point of recruitment into the Civil Service as part of wider pre-employment checks, but there is no requirement on departments to retain this information beyond the point at which it has served its purpose.</p> <p>More broadly, the Government will be consulting in due course on how we work with business to ensure that workers in this country have the skills that they need to get a job. But there are no proposals to publish lists of the number or proportion of foreign workers.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/115
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>I would like to refine my FOI (ref FOI.17.47). As advised in your response, please provide me with a copy of all records held by the NIO where the phrase "donation" or "donations" appears in the title of the record. I would like this to include all records from April, May, June and July 2017. If this time period is still too long to comply with time and cost exemptions please provide me with the information for June and July 2017.</i></p>

Response

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). The law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for.

In this case, a very large number of emails held by staff across the Department had donation or donations in the title. Hence, in order to comply with your request, officials would be required to open and read a large amount of records individually. A request for 'all records' is often likely to lead to a response under Section (12)1 of the FOIA as any subject may have numerous officials involved; and with search facilities as powerful as they now are, searches frequently give a very large number of results, many of which are false positives but would have to be assessed. We have discussed at length in the NIO how we could advise you to refine your request and we have tried searching in different ways, but in each case we have either still had too many results or clearly narrowed too far giving misleading results.

You may wish to submit a further refined request however in this case we consider that any repeat of the question may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit leading to a further response under Section 12(1). We appreciate that this is a disappointing result and are sorry that on this occasion we have not been able to answer your request. You can find out more about Section 12(1) by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12>.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT SECTION 12(1)

We have provided below additional information about Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act. We have included some extracts from the legislation, as well as some of the guidance we use when applying it. We hope you find this information useful.

The legislation**Section 1: Right of Access to information held by public authorities**

- (1) 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.

Section 12: Cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

- (1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.
- (3) In subsections (1) and (2) “the appropriate limit” means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.
- (4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority—
 - (a) by one person, or
 - (b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign,
- (5) the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.
- (6) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.

Guidance

The appropriate limit

The 'appropriate limit', for the purposes of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act has been set at:

- £600 for central government and Parliament.
- The hourly rate is set at £25 per person per hour.

The following activities may be taken into account when public authorities are estimating whether the appropriate limit has been exceeded.

- determining whether it holds the information requested
- locating the information or documents containing the information
- retrieving such information or documents
- extracting the information from the document containing it.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/116
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>I would like to make an enquiry about the number of data breaches that have happened in your department in the last two years. I would like the information in spreadsheet form, under these categories:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information breaches by outside sources (i.e. hackers and cybercrime).</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Information breaches by human error (i.e. sending personal data to incorrect emails, physically losing data drives etc)</i> • <i>Intentional internal information breaches (i.e. employees of your department sending out data for malicious purposes)</i> <p><i>I would like this organised quarterly from August 2015-August 2017.</i></p> <p><i>I would like the number of data breach incidents per quarter, with some basic information about what type of information was leaked (e.g. names, addresses, national insurance numbers, and how many names, addresses etc).</i></p>
Response	<p>The Northern Ireland Office can neither confirm nor deny that it holds the information you requested as the duty in section 1(1)(a) of the FOI Act does not apply, by virtue of both section 24(2) that relates to national security and section 31(1)(a) that relates to law enforcement and the prevention of crime. However, this should not be taken as conclusive evidence that the information you have requested exists or does not exist.</p> <p>Section 24 is a qualified exemption and so we have considered whether it would be in the public interest for us to confirm or deny whether we hold the information. In this case, we have concluded that the public interest favours neither confirming nor denying whether the requested information is held.</p> <p>Section 31 is a prejudice based exemption and is subject to the public interest test. With regard to your request, we recognise the public interest in knowing whether the government holds particular information. Balanced against this, is the public interest in not releasing information that would aid a criminal intent on launching cyber-attacks on the Department's IT systems. In this case we consider that the wider public interest lies in neither confirming nor denying that information, which may have been disclosed in an unauthorised manner, is held.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/117
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>I would like to request the following information.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The number of individuals working off-payroll, via their own limited company, engaged by your department in the periods listed below.</i> 2. <i>The number of individuals working off-payroll, via their own limited company, who ceased work with your department in the periods listed below.</i> 3. <i>The number of individuals working off-payroll, via their own limited company, whose contracts were terminated before the agreed finishing date, in the periods listed below.</i>

	<p>4. <i>The number of individuals working off-payroll, via their own limited company, who transferred to full time employment with your department, in the periods listed below.</i></p> <p>1) <i>Q1 2016</i> 2) <i>Q2 2016</i> 3) <i>Q3 2016</i> 4) <i>Q4 2016</i> 5) <i>Q1 2017</i> 6) <i>Q2 2017</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Office has not employed any individuals meeting the criteria specified during the periods listed.</p>
FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/118
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>I would be grateful if you could provide a copy of your agency/department's current policy/guidance to staff relating to the deletion of emails.</i></p> <p><i>I am also seeking the following information, if it is not contained within the above documents:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. An answer as to whether your organisation has a general policy on automatically deleting emails after a certain period of time. If so, what type of emails are deleted (e.g. calendar invites/sent items/inbox items/all items) and after what period of time?</i> <i>2. I note that National Archives guidance states that organisations should "define clearly which emails need to be kept for business or historical value". Please provide your organisation's definition.</i> <i>3. Details of your organisation's policy on routinely deleting dormant accounts/those of former staff (i.e. what type of emails are deleted and after what period of time?)</i> <p><i>I am making this request to all central departments and a number of additional agencies.</i></p>
Response	<p>The NIO does hold some of the information you have requested. The Management of email including retention of emails as corporate records is contained in departmental policies, NIO Information Management Policy, Internet and Email Usage Policy and Email as a Corporate Record, which mandates deletion of all emails after 90 days. Guidance on records and email management is routinely issued to staff, see attachments.</p>

	<p>Records Management System and Google System (including Gmail) accounts for former staff members are de-activated and deleted within 90 days after Line Management notification. Our IT service provider deletes the Active Directory account which in effect removes access to the Records Management System and Google System. All emails not saved to the corporate records store are deleted at the time of account deletion.</p> <p>Please see the following attachments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information Management Policy Annex B section 4. 2. Internet & Email Usage Policy section 11: Storing Emails 3. Email as a Corporate Record 4. Guidance on Email Deletion
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/119
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>I am lodging an official request for information under the Freedom of Information Act.</i></p> <p><i>International Trade Secretary Liam Fox, speaking on BBC1's Sunday Politics on 16/07/17, stated that all Government departments had their own "contingency plan" in case there is "no deal" reached on Brexit by March 2019.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) Did the Northern Ireland Office have such a "contingency plan" on 16/07/17?</i> <i>2) If it did, what date was the Northern Ireland Office's "contingency plan" for "no deal" on Brexit completed?</i> <i>3) If it did not have such a "contingency plan" for "no deal" on Brexit on 16/07/17, does the Northern Ireland Office have one now?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>We note that the Secretary of State's quote was that "Government departments across Whitehall are all working on their contingency plans". For the most part these 'contingency plans' are not a single bound document of some kind, but a programme of assessments being made across each organisation's remit, taking account of current developments in coordination with the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) and, in the case of executive agencies and arms length bodies, their associated department.</p> <p>Therefore in response to your request,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) DExEU is responsible for overseeing and coordinating work on the UK's approach to the negotiations with the EU. As such, the Northern Ireland Office is feeding directly into DExEU's wider programme of contingency planning.

	<p>2) Given the fluid nature of the negotiations, it is prudent for those contingency plans being undertaken to be regularly revised and updated to reflect the current situation.</p> <p>3) N/A</p> <p>For further information, please contact DExEU.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/120
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Please send me all information relating to the decision not to implement the UK government's counter-terrorism strategy, Prevent, in Northern Ireland.</i> <p><i>And to the following questions, can you please tell me:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Is the government reviewing its decision not to implement Prevent in Northern Ireland?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>I can advise that the PREVENT strategy forms one part of CONTEST which is the UK Government's overarching strategy for countering terrorism. The Home Secretary has responsibility for CONTEST. The primary focus of CONTEST is countering international terrorism, not domestic related terrorism which is the principal threat in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>More detail on CONTEST can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97995/strategy-contest.pdf</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/121
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>For the periods of 1 June - 1 July 2016 and 1 June - 1 July 2017, please provide:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>All WhatsApp messages used in group chats by members of the department. Information on how to easily export the messages can be found here.</i>

Please list users alongside their relevant department and, including job role where their name has been redacted. Feel free to redact the names of non-senior staff. Please also individually annotate redactions, listing reasons for them. You will note that redactions are not included in the cost limits of the freedom of information act.

As [the ICO states in its guidance](#): "Information held in non-work personal email accounts (e.g. Hotmail, Yahoo and Gmail) may be subject to FOIA if it relates to the official business of the public authority. All such information which is held by someone who has a direct, formal connection with the public authority is potentially subject to FOIA regardless of whether it is held in an official or private email account. If the information held in a private account amounts to public authority business it is very likely to be held on behalf of the public authority in accordance with section 3(2)(b)."

Please also note that in a previous decision [the ICO ruled that Slack messages do come under the scope of FOI](#), and likewise [WhatsApp messages have been released under FOI](#).

Response

I can confirm that the Department holds some of the information that you have requested. However, because the cost of complying with your request would exceed the limit set by the Freedom of Information Act, on this occasion I'm afraid I will not be taking your request further.

As this information is not held centrally, officials would be required to contact each business group in the Northern Ireland Office to determine if their staff have set up any group chats on WhatsApp for the period in question and then locate and extract any relevant information.

You should not infer from this that the Department holds a large amount of information relating to your enquiry, only that we would need to search through a large amount of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request.

The law allows us to decline to answer requests under s12 of the FOIA when we estimate that it would cost us more than £600 to locate, retrieve and extract information that has been asked for. There are only certain activities that we can take into account when making this calculation, but you may be interested to know that the limit is equivalent to 3½ working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour.

Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a refined request within the cost limit. For example, you might wish to specify a subject matter. Please note that, as in this instance, a refined request may still not

	fall within the FOIA cost limit. If it does fall within the cost limit, other exemptions to the requirement to provide information might still apply.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/122
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>I would be grateful if you would provide me with information held by your Department relating to the following:</i></p> <p><i>(a) The number of Crown properties in England and Wales owned or operated by your Department;</i></p> <p><i>(b) The identity and location of these Crown properties;</i></p> <p><i>(c) The total number of Government employees working at these properties.</i></p> <p><i>If this information is not available in the form requested then I would be grateful for any similar information that would be of assistance in allowing at least an approximation to be made to these requests for information.</i></p> <p><i>For the avoidance of doubt, my request for information is made under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") 2000.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>In relation to Question A no properties are owned by the department in England and Wales however one property is operated in England.</p> <p>In relation to Question B the department operates from rented accommodation within the HM Treasury building at One Horse Guards Road, London.</p> <p>In relation to Question C, whilst many NIO staff are required to work from both our London and Belfast locations, 56 staff are based in London.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/123
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act I would like to ask for information on the activity your department/authority (Northern Ireland Office) has undertaken related keys and certificates – the electronic credentials used to validate the online identities of individuals, computers and other electronic entities - and public key infrastructure (PKI) – the roles, policies and procedures used to create, manage, distribute and use digital certificates and public key encryption.</i></p>

	<p><i>I am looking for data on activity undertaken between 1st August 2016 and 31st July 2017 (inclusive).</i></p> <p><i>If possible, could you share the following: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How regularly do you undertake audits of the keys and certificates within your organisation between 1st August 2016 and 31st July 2017 (inclusive)?</i> <i>Do you have a policy covering how often you change or rotate keys and certificates? If so, how often is this done?</i> <i>How many times have you detected people attempting to use unauthorised devices on your system between 1st August 2016 and 31st July 2017 (inclusive)?</i> <i>Do you have a documented framework covering policies related to information security relating to the PKI? If so when was this last updated? (Covering the period between 1st August 2016 and 31st July 2017 (inclusive))</i> <i>How often do you undertake an audit of certificates & PKI data? When was the last time this was undertaken? (Covering the period between 1st August 2016 and 31st July 2017 (inclusive))</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Office received managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance and Personnel, Northern Ireland. 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</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/124
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>I am a journalist at the Press Association writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How much (in pounds sterling) was spent on the most recent renovation or refurbishment of private bathroom facilities for the most senior department minister in the Department head offices</i> <i>The date of the refurbishment or renovation</i> <i>An itemised receipt of how exactly that money was spent</i> <i>The chain of command by which such expenditure was commissioned and approved</i>
Response	<p>The Department does not provide private bathroom facilities for the most senior minister in the Departmental head office. As a result there are no refurbishment renovation costs to report.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/125
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please provide me with the following information:</i></p> <p><i>a) The advertised speed of the internet connection at each premises used by The Northern Ireland Office at the time of writing.</i></p>
Response	<p>NIO use the shared IT Assist provided internet service which is 2Gb provided via the central Belfast Data Centres.</p> <p>IT Assist does not have any other internet service for the use of NIO at any other sites.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/126
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request copies of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>For the financial year 2016/17 the percentage gender make-up, mean gender pay gap and median gender pay gap for the Department's:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Senior Civil Servants</i> – <i>Grade 6 & 7 civil servants</i> – <i>Senior & Higher executive Officers</i> – <i>Administrative Officers & Assistants</i> – <i>Civil Servants at all responsibility levels</i> – <i>Employees not included in the above</i> – <i>The Department's entire workforce</i> • <i>The proportion of men and women employed by the receiving a bonus payment for the financial year 2016/17</i> • <i>The mean and median gender pay gap with respect to bonus or performance-related pay awarded by the department across its entire workforce for the financial year 2016/17</i> • <i>The percentage of women in the Lower Quartile, Lower Middle Quartile, Upper Middle Quartile, and Upper Quartile for hourly pay across the Department's entire workforce for the financial year 2016/17</i> • <i>The measures the Department is taking to close the gender pay gap.</i>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

	<p>The information provided relates only to Home Civil Servants employed by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and excludes staff seconded to the NIO from the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) who remain on NICS terms and conditions, including pay.</p> <p>The information requested can be found on the Office for National Statistics website at: http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/datasets/civilservicestatistics</p> <p>And at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/datasets/civilservicestatistics/datasummarytool</p> <p>The final part of your request in which you ask "the measures the Department is taking to close the gender pay gap" is not a valid request for information under the FOIA as it is not a request for recorded information. The department has acknowledged this part as a Treat Official and our Private Office will be in contact with an official response.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/127
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request copies of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Details of the department's food and catering services, both for in house facilities services and the department's suppliers, including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Proportion of food by value which is to UK production standards or equivalent</i> – <i>Proportion of food which has been sourced from UK producers</i> – <i>Proportion of food which has been produced to Farm Assured standards or equivalent</i> – <i>Proportion of food which has been produced to "Integrated production standards" or other higher environmental standards, for example LEAF or organic</i> – <i>Proportion of food which is covered by a scheme that addresses animal welfare issues that go beyond minimum legal requirements, for example "Freedom Food"</i> – <i>Proportion of fish which, if farmed, is certified to "Freedom Food" or equivalent and if wild caught is certified to MSC or equivalent</i> – <i>Proportion of tea, coffee and sugar certified as "Free Trade" or similar accreditation</i> • <i>Any reports produced by the department since 2010 on its adherence to government buying standards (GBS) with respect to food and catering services</i>

Response	The Department does not hold this information as catering provisions are contracted out.
FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/129
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting the following information:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What number of staff in your department are paid through umbrella companies?</i> 2. <i>What number of staff in your department are hired through recruitment companies?</i> 3. <i>What number of staff in your department are on temporary contracts?</i> 4. <i>Which recruitment agencies does your department use?</i> 5. <i>What number of staff in your department are paid through the following companies:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parasol Ltd?</i> • <i>Danbro Ltd?</i> • <i>Giant?</i> 6. <i>Which other companies are staff employed in your department paid through, and what is the number of staff per company?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). The responses to your questions are set out below in the order they were asked.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No member of staff in the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) are paid through umbrella companies 2. No current members of staff have been hired through recruitment companies 3. The NIO currently has five temporary members of staff 4. The Government Procurement Framework provides details of the agencies that the NIO can use for recruiting temporary workers. Details can be found at the link below https://ccs-agreements.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/suppliers 5. No members of NIO staff are paid through these companies 6. No members of NIO staff are paid through any other companies
FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/131
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<i>I am writing under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from the Human Resources Department.</i>

(1) Could you please supply me with a breakdown of your staff establishment (all civil servants at post) as at June 1, 2017 broken down as follows:

- By Ethnicity, Gender & Disability Status; and
- By the following Annual Salary Bands:
 - < £30,000 (AO-EO Grades)
 - £30,001 - £68,000 (HEO-G6 Grades)
 - > £68,000 (SCS Grades)

Please include a copy of your current Pay Band/Salary Scales for all posts.

(2) Could you please also supply me with a breakdown by Ethnicity, Gender and Disability status of all (a) applicants (internal and external) and (b) shortlisted candidates for the most recently advertised HEO Vacant Post, whenever that may have been.

Response

(1) The information provided relates only to Home Civil Servants employed by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and excludes staff seconded to the NIO from the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) who remain on NICS terms and conditions, including pay.

The information requested can be found on the Office for National Statistics website at:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/datasets/civilservicestatistics>

And at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/publicsectorpersonnel/datasets/civilservicestatistics/datasummarytool>

I can confirm that gender information for Senior Civil Servants in the Northern Ireland Office is published in our Annual Report and Accounts which can be accessed at www.nio.gov.uk

The Northern Ireland Office aligns with the terms and conditions of the Ministry of Justice and the pay scales are detailed below:

Summary of MoJ pay ranges from 1 August 2016

Open pay ranges for Bands A – F

Pay band	Pay Range	Area	Band Min	Band Max
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	Band A	1	Inner London	51,039	68,969
		Aa	Specialist + 5%	53,590	72,368
		Ab	Specialist + 10%	56,143	75,766
		Ac	Specialist + 15%	58,694	79,164
		2	Outer London	46,700	65,832
		Aa	Specialist + 5%	49,034	69,074
		Ab	Specialist + 10%	51,370	72,315
		Ac	Specialist + 15%	53,704	75,557
		3	National	42,454	61,649
		Aa	Specialist + 5%	44,576	64,682
		Ab	Specialist + 10%	46,699	67,714
		Ac	Specialist + 15%	48,821	70,747
	Band B	1	Inner London	35,540	45,964
		Ba	Specialist + 5%	37,317	48,212
		Bb	Specialist + 10%	39,094	50,461
		Bc	Specialist + 15%	40,872	52,709
		2	Outer London	33,627	43,873
		Ba	Specialist + 5%	35,309	46,016
		Bb	Specialist + 10%	36,989	48,160
		Bc	Specialist + 15%	38,671	50,304
		3	National	29,930	39,690
		Ba	Specialist + 5%	31,427	41,625
		Bb	Specialist + 10%	32,924	43,559
		Bc	Specialist + 15%	34,419	45,494
	Band C	1	Inner London	29,790	37,061
		Ca	Specialist + 5%	31,280	38,864
		Cb	Specialist + 10%	32,769	40,667
		2	Outer London and SE Hotspots	27,619	35,515
		Ca	Specialist + 5%	29,000	37,241
		Cb	Specialist + 10%	30,382	38,967
3		Hotspots	25,646	32,939	

		Ca	Specialist + 5%	26,929	34,536
		Cb	Specialist + 10%	28,210	
	4		National Plus	23,181	30,879
		Ca	Specialist + 5%	24,340	32,373
		Cb	Specialist + 10%	25,498	33,867
	5		National (Existing)	21,559	30,879
		Ca	Specialist + 5%	22,373	32,373
		Cb	Specialist + 10%	23,438	33,867
Band D	1		Inner London	25,257	29,000
		Db	Specialist + 10%	27,682	31,800
	2		Outer London and SE Hotspots	23,369	27,000
		Db	Specialist + 10%	25,606	29,600
	3		Hotspots	21,581	25,727
		Db	Specialist + 10%	23,638	28,200
	4		National Plus	20,246	24,244
		Db	Specialist + 10%	21,559	26,568
	5		National (Existing)	20,246	24,244
		Db	Specialist + 10%	20,467	26,568
Band E (open range)	1		Inner London	21,686	23,250
	2		Outer London and SE Hotspots	20,375	21,905
	3		Hotspots	19,055	20,550
	4		National Plus	18,059	19,529
	5		National Existing	18,059	19,529
Band F (open range)	1		Inner London	18,226	19,700
	2		Outer London and SE Hotspots	17,202	18,650
	3		Hotspots	15,594	17,000
	4		National Plus	15,131	16,524
	5		National Existing	15,131	16,524

	<p>Note: The table shows the maxima and minima for each pay range with effect from 1 August 2016</p> <p>In respect of question (1) ethnicity and disability, and question (2) I can confirm that the department holds information that you have asked for, but in this case we will not be providing it to you as it is exempt from disclosure.</p> <p>We are not obliged, under section 40(2) of the Act, to provide information that is the personal information of another person if releasing would contravene any of the provisions in the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). In this instance we believe that the release of this information would contravene the first data protection principle and therefore section 40 (2) is engaged. The terms of this exemption in the Freedom of Information Act mean that we do not have to consider whether or not it would be in the public interest for you to have the information.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/132
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request copies of the following:</i></p> <p><i>For each of the following websites operated by your department a) how many unique visitors the site received in the 2015/16 financial year, b) how much the website cost to maintain in the 2015/16 financial year and c) how much the website cost to design.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland, http://www.boundarycommission.org.uk/</i> • <i>Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission http://www.nihrc.org/</i> • <i>Parades Commission for Northern Ireland http://www.paradescommission.org/</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>Each of the listed public bodies operates independently from government and is a named authority listed in Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I would advise you to contact each body directly in relation to your enquiry. Contact details can be found on each of the websites.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/133
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<i>I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information, relating to cybersecurity software used by the department:</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide me with details of all software used from the company 'Kaspersky' (including the name of the software). • The number of licences for each piece of software being used from the company • The amount spent on the software/licences from Kaspersky within the last 3 financial years
Response	The Northern Ireland Office received managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance and Personnel, Northern Ireland. 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

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/136
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In how many cases did completion of Annual Performance Appraisal Reports in NICS have to be suspended until such times as issues involving suspected (but as yet unproven) officially endorsed fraud, bias, malpractice or other impropriety were forensically resolved? • In how many such problematic cases were all encompassing Communication Bans therefore officially imposed without limit of time?
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within the scope of your request; however as your enquiry relates to the Northern Ireland Civil Service, the Executive Office may be able to assist with your enquiry. Their FOI team can be contacted at the following address foi@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/17/137
Month Issued	September 2017
Request	<p>I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from the NI Office:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amount spent on social media campaigns (e.g. promoted posts) by the department by channel (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) and by month for the following years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017(- to date)
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>I can confirm that there has been no expenditure on social media since it was introduced.</p>