

QUARTER 4 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSES

Year	Month	FOI Reference	Topic
2018	Oct	FOI/18/189	Archival file request: 1975 PIRA ceasefire
2018	Oct	FOI/18/217	Spending on external law firms and barristers
2018	Oct	FOI/18/218	Correspondence on Brexit and the Irish border
2018	Oct	FOI/18/220	Work and activities of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
2018	Oct	FOI/18/221	Spending on pest control
2018	Oct	FOI/18/222	Ministerial briefing papers
2018	Oct	FOI/18/224	Report entitled 'But Me No Buts' by Sir Maurice Oldfield
2018	Oct	FOI/18/225	Spending over £25,000
2018	Oct	FOI/18/229	Governmental or departmental priorities
2018	Oct	FOI/18/230	Brexit impact assessments
2018	Oct	FOI/18/231	Ministerial visits to Northern Ireland
2018	Oct	FOI/18/232	Ministerial visits to Northern Ireland
2018	Oct	FOI/18/233	Advancement of LGBTI rights in Northern Ireland
2018	Oct	FOI/18/234	Correspondence on MLA pay cuts
2018	Oct	FOI/18/235	Bullying complaints
2018	Oct	FOI/18/236	Recruitment of EU citizens
2018	Oct	FOI/18/237	Quality Standards (Assessment and Care Management SSI 1999)
2018	Oct	FOI/18/241	Professional standards statements
2018	Oct	FOI/18/242	FOI requests refused on the basis of cost
2018	Nov	FOI/18/227	Correspondence on legalising abortion in Northern Ireland
2018	Nov	FOI/18/238	Ministerial visits to Northern Ireland
2018	Nov	FOI/18/239	Public engagement policies
2018	Nov	FOI/18/240	Public engagement policies
2018	Nov	FOI/18/243	Brussels: travel and accommodation costs
2018	Nov	FOI/18/244	Spending on Christmas parties
2018	Nov	FOI/18/245	Non-disclosure agreements

2018	Nov	FOI/18/246	Staff drug tests
2018	Nov	FOI/18/247	IT software
2018	Nov	FOI/18/248	Legal disputes between central and local government
2018	Nov	FOI/18/249	Brexit consultancy spend
2018	Nov	FOI/18/250	IT risk assessments
2018	Nov	FOI/18/251	FOI team staff numbers
2018	Nov	FOI/18/252	Staffing ethnicity data
2018	Nov	FOI/18/253	Correspondence on the abolition of bi-annual clock changes
2018	Nov	FOI/18/254	Ministerial visits to Northern Ireland
2018	Nov	FOI/18/255	Bullying complaints
2018	Nov	FOI/18/256	Brexit talks: First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland visit
2018	Nov	FOI/18/257	Wi-Fi contract
2018	Nov	FOI/18/258	Facilities management contract
2018	Nov	FOI/18/259	Non-disclosure agreements on Brexit preparations
2018	Nov	FOI/18/260	Ministerial visits to Northern Ireland
2018	Dec	FOI/18/261	1976 fire at 39 Upper English Street, Armagh: compensation
2018	Dec	FOI/18/262	Spending on external law firms and barristers
2018	Dec	FOI/18/263	Online advertising: excluded websites
2018	Dec	FOI/18/264	Ministerial visits to Northern Ireland
2018	Dec	FOI/18/265	Expense fraud
2018	Dec	FOI/18/266	CCTV maintenance and support contract
2018	Dec	FOI/18/267	Correspondence on Brexit
2018	Dec	FOI/18/268	Staff away days
2018	Dec	FOI/18/269	Staff pay award for 2018/19
2018	Dec	FOI/18/270	Brussels: travel and accommodation costs
2018	Dec	FOI/18/271	Non-disclosure agreements on bullying and sexual harassment incidents
2018	Dec	FOI/18/272	Staffing data: gender split and working arrangements
2018	Dec	FOI/18/273	Ministerial visits to Northern Ireland

2018	Dec	FOI/18/275	Brexit policy documentation
2018	Dec	FOI/18/276	Principle Private Secretary: international and domestic visits
2018	Dec	FOI/18/277	Spending on gifts and parties
2018	Dec	FOI/18/278	Mobile phone contract
2018	Dec	FOI/18/279	Internet outages
2018	Dec	FOI/18/280	No-deal Brexit preparations
2018	Dec	FOI/18/283	Apprentices: job titles and salaries

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/189
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>I am writing to you to request the release of information, under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. Please provide to me, in complete or redacted form, the following files held by your Department, as listed on the National Archives catalogue:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CJ 4/3718: PIRA: 1975 ceasefire; incident centres and other forms of monitoring; roles of the RUC and the Army; concerns over increased violence, 1975.</i> • <i>CJ 4/3722: PIRA: 1975 ceasefire; exchanges between NIO Ministers and officials, 1975.</i> • <i>CJ 4/3712: PIRA: 1975 ceasefire; incident centres; operation reports, 1975.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>You have previously been informed that two of the files you have requested are not held by the NIO but by the National Archives.</p> <p>We sincerely apologise for the delay in response for the third file, an internal administrative error led to the case being closed.</p> <p>I can confirm that the department holds CJ 4/3712 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</p>

	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/18/217
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>I would like to know the amount of money your department spent on the services of external law firms and barristers for the year ending March 31st 2018.</i></p> <p><i>Please exclude legal services provided by the Government Legal Department. However, please include legal services that the Government Legal Department has outsourced to a third party.</i></p> <p><i>You can approximate spending levels, i.e. if you are not able to provide the exact figures, you can give us your best estimate.</i></p> <p><i>Please note that the figure we have requested should exclude spending by your department on the GLD (Government Legal Department) and its predecessor the TSoL (Treasury Solicitor's Department).</i></p>
Response	The total expenditure the Department incurred on the services of external law firms and barristers for the year ending March 31 st 2018 is £371,665.53.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/218
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information legislation, I request the following data:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Records of correspondence with Karen Bradley and the NIO by members of the public in relation to Brexit and the Irish border.</i> <i>2. What form has the correspondence taken? I.e. letter, email.</i> <i>3. How many people has communicated?</i> <i>4. I request, with names and address omitted, copies of such correspondence.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>Freedom of information 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 a request (section 12 FOIA).</p>

We have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as 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 different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the broad scope of your request we consider this would cost over £600.

Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request by providing a shorter timeframe/date range or more specific types of stakeholders.

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 number 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. You may wish to consider focusing your request on a narrower range of issues and/or on records produced during a more focussed set of dates.

Please note that, as in this instance, a further 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—
 - 1) by one person, or
 - 2) 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 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.

Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>I wish to make a request for information under Freedom of Information legislation in relation to the workings and activities of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Karen Bradley.</i></p> <p><i>More specifically I wish to seek the following information:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The number of official days spent by the Secretary of State in Northern Ireland between 1st January 2018 and the date of this FOI request.</i> • <i>A breakdown of expenses and allowances paid to the Secretary of State between 1st January 2018 and the date of this FOI request.</i> • <i>A breakdown of all decisions made by the Secretary of State since taking up office in January 2018.</i> • <i>A breakdown of legislation proposed by the Secretary of State since January 2018, including legislation passed at Westminster and forthcoming legislation to be passed in the next six months.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>Freedom of information 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 a request (section 12 FOIA).</p> <p>We have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as 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 different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the broad scope of your request we consider this would cost over £600.</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. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request by providing a shorter timeframe/date range or more specific types of stakeholders.</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 number of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request.</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>.

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- (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

	<p>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.</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>Guidance</p> <p><u>The appropriate limit</u></p> <p>The 'appropriate limit', for the purposes of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act has been set at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £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/18/221
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>I would like some information under the Freedom of Information Act.</i></p> <p><i>Could you please tell me how many times pest controllers have been called to your department since April 2013, and the cost of those call outs.</i></p> <p><i>Could you please break the information down by financial year - i.e. 2013/14 etc.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR).</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Office maintains two office locations, one in Stormont House, Belfast and another in 1 Horse Guards Road, London. In both cases the landlords for the property are responsible for the managed services of Pest Control. The information requested in relation to costs relating to call out is not held by the NIO.</p>

	<p>Therefore the collation of this information would be both lengthy and time consuming. The department has considered your request for information; however we consider the request to fall under regulation 12(4) (b) of the EIR which allows public authorities to refuse a request for information that is manifestly unreasonable.</p> <p>Regulation 12(4)(b) states:</p> <p>12(4) For the purposes of paragraph (1) (a), a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that – (b) the request for information is manifestly unreasonable.</p>
FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/222
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>I am sending this request under the Freedom of Information Act to ask for the following information:</i></p> <p><i>Please can you give me all initial briefing papers that civil servants at the Northern Ireland Office gave to Karen Bradley to read upon her appointment as Northern Ireland Secretary?</i></p> <p><i>I am aware that there will be sensitive security information that you will be unable to disclose, but I would like all briefings and explanatory notes for the new secretary of state on subjects including, but not limited to, the current political situation in NI, all notes on the historical background of the political situation in NI etc.</i></p>
Response	<p>This information is exempt under sections 35 and 36 of the Freedom of the Information Act.</p> <p>Section 35(1)(a) protects information relating to the formulation or development of government policy and (b) Ministerial communications, and Section 36 prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs.</p> <p>We have considered the public interest in disclosing this information. There is a public interest in the way in which government decisions are made and how relationships with other stakeholders are conducted. Disclosure would help the public to appreciate the considerations surrounding policy discussions, and the context in which Ministers operate. There is also a public interest in how decisions are made, at what level, and the reasons behind these decisions so that government officials can be more accountable for their decisions and responsibilities. Release of the information could demonstrate the quality of advice provided by the Department. However, these factors are of modest weight in this case, as the NIO proactively publishes information about the Departmental structure, Ministers make regular statements to Parliament (both oral and in writing) on policy issues - setting out rationale and responding to questioning along those lines, and make themselves</p>

	<p>available for frequent media engagement. The department also responds to public inquiries on a range of matters through Treat Officials and Minister's Cases, and undertakes structured engagement with a wide range of relevant interlocutors.</p> <p>This information was provided with a reasonable expectation that it would not be released into the public domain; it was contextual background provided to ensure Ministers had a written briefing supporting their induction into the Department. We have not found a precedent for other Departments releasing such materials. It would seem a reasonable assumption that much of the advice provided then filtered through into Parliamentary statements, other public comments and correspondence relating to the issues covered, where appropriate. To release the information could also put a greater focus on process than policy decisions.</p> <p>After careful consideration we have concluded that s35(a) (b) and s36 2(a) (b) is engaged and it is in the public interest to withhold the documents.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/224
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>I'm getting in touch as I would like to request a copy of a report entitled 'But Me No Buts', written by Sir Maurice Oldfield. It was prepared while he was coordinating security and intelligence in Northern Ireland.</i></p> <p><i>The report was prepared for Humphrey Atkins, then Northern Ireland Secretary of State. I believe the year to have been 1979, although it is possible that it was 1980 or 1981.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>A search of all records held has confirmed that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold information that falls within the scope of your request. However, I would direct you to the following information that was identified following an internet search for 'oldfield no me no buts' which returned the following result:-</p> <p>https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=I01gCwAAQBAJ&pg=PA188&lpg=PA188&dq=oldfield+no</p> <p>An additional internet search for PREM 19/83 in discovery on The National Archives website, provides you with the information below that is available to the public, please select the third link:-</p> <p>http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?_q=PREM+19%2F83</p>

	The National Archives do offer support and advice on research into historic government records, as the overwhelming amount of material is open to the public it may be more efficient in the future to use them as your first port of call.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/225
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>I'm making a request under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) for information on all transactions over £25,000 from June 2015 to date. Please provide:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the date of transaction</i> • <i>the value of transaction</i> • <i>the recipient</i> • <i>category of the transaction</i> <p><i>(As a minimum)</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>I can confirm that the department holds information that you have asked for, but it is exempt from disclosure because it is intended for future publication.</p> <p>We are not obliged to provide information that is intended for future publication (section 22 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, I have concluded that the public interest favours withholding the information.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/229
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>Under FOI laws, please could I request details from March 18 2018 to the current date of any written reference by a minister, official or spokesperson for this department to something being "a priority" for either the department or the Government.</i></p> <p><i>This could be in the form of a press release, comment or statement, published through official government channels or sent from a department email address to a journalist or news organisation. This can include where reference to "a priority" is made in the Notes to Editors section. Note – personal correspondence should not be included.</i></p>

Please reply with the release / statement in question and the date it was sent.

Any reference to something being "one of our (department's / Government's) priorities" should also be included in this search.

Response

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

Freedom of information 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 a request (section 12 FOIA).

We have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as 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 different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the broad scope of your request we consider this would cost over £600.

Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request by providing a shorter timeframe/date range or more specific types of stakeholders.

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 number 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. You may wish to consider focusing your request on a narrower range of issues and/or on records produced during a more focussed set of dates.

Please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit.

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- (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 has been set at:

- £600 for central government and Parliament.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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/18/230
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 I would like to request release of the following information:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Any assessment held by your department on the impact of Brexit on young people and children.</i> <i>Any assessment held by your department on the impact of withdrawal from the Erasmus+ scheme.</i> <i>Any impact assessment or plans held by your department concerning the Brussels II bis regulation (Council Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003) to continue to cooperate on cross- border divorces and child custody cases.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The law, specifically Section 12(1), 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>We regret to advise that your request has been declined on these grounds.</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>In order to determine whether the Department holds any records which fall within the scope of the request, officials across the Department would be required to locate, analyse and extract a large number of records. The cost of doing so would engage the cost limits outlined above. Although we cannot answer your request, we might be able to answer a refined request</p>

	within the cost limit. However, please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit, or may engage one or more FOIA exemptions.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/231
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to request the following information:</i></p> <p><i>The number of times the Secretary of State, Karen Bradley, has visited Northern Ireland since taking up her post in January 2018.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The SoS has spent 57 days in Northern Ireland since being appointed as Secretary of State. This is alongside Parliamentary and Constituency commitments.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/232
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>I wish to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act for the following records which I believe to be held by the department</i></p> <p><i>All trips made to Northern Ireland by the following Secretaries of State during their tenure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Owen Paterson</i> • <i>Theresa Villiers</i> • <i>James Brokenshire</i> • <i>Karen Bradley</i> <p><i>Please include the date of their arrival and departure, a list of any official engagements and the associated cost of each trip.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>Freedom of information 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 a request (section 12 FOIA).</p>

We have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as 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 different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the broad scope of your request we consider this would cost over £600.

Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request by providing a shorter timeframe/date range or more specific types of stakeholders.

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 number 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>.

With regards to your request for information of official engagements, ministerial engagements are published on a quarterly basis and can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=northern-ireland-office>

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 consider focusing your request on a narrower range of issues and/or on records produced during a more focussed set of dates. Please note that, as in this instance, a further 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 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

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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/233
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>Please provide the following under the FOI Act:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Documents relating to the advancement of LGBTI rights in Northern Ireland from June 2017 onwards.</i> <p><i>With regards key phrases, please would you perform the search using the phrases “LGBTI”, “LGBT” “GLBT” or “LGBTIQ”?</i> <i>With regard types of documents, please would you limit your search to documents seen by the Northern Ireland Minister?</i> <i>Date Range: June 2017 to the current date.</i></p>
Response	<p>Freedom of information 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 determine whether we can provide the information that has been asked for in a request (section 12 FOIA).</p> <p>We have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as to comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such information, officials would be required to open and read documents seen by the Northern Ireland Minister, which even if limited to one Minister and not the entire Ministerial team, would involve a large amount of different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the broad scope of your request we consider this would cost over £600.</p> <p>We recognise that your previous FOI request, issued to us on 17 August asking for documents relating to the advancement of LGBTI rights, was also declined on the basis of Section 12 of the FOIA. We would like to reiterate our response to this previous request: although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request, for example by providing a series of key phrases/terms for us to use in searching our records, specific types of documents, or a shorter timeframe/date range.</p> <p>You should not infer from this that the NIO 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>

You can find out more about Section 12 of the FOIA 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>.

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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/234
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>I am writing in regards to the decision to cut MLAs' pay.</i></p> <p><i>1. Please provide copies of any correspondence sent to or by SoS Brokenshire or Bradley to MLAs or NI parties or the UK Government re discussions around cutting MLAs' pay since January 2017 when the Assembly collapsed.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>Freedom of information 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 a request (section 12 FOIA).</p> <p>We have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as 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 different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the broad scope of your request we consider this would cost over £600.</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. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request by providing a shorter timeframe/date range or more specific types of stakeholders.</p>

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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 consider focusing your request on a narrower range of issues and/or on records produced during a more focussed set of dates.

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- 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/18/235
Month Issued	October 2018
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 bullying complaints. Please could you provide me with the following:</i></p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many people have made complaints that they suffered bullying by other members of staff in the department in the last three calendar years (up to and including September 2018)? Please could you break this information down by year and gender? 2. How many members of staff have faced civil service disciplinary investigations as a result of an accusation of bullying made against them in the last three calendar years (up to and including September 2018)? Please could you break this information down by year, gender? In each case, please could you state whether any misconduct was found and, if so, what type of disciplinary action was taken including verbal/written/final warnings, suspension, dismissal etc.
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>No complaints of bullying by other members of staff in the department have been received in the last three calendar years (up to and including September 2018)</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/236
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p>I'm writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</p> <p>Could you please provide me with answer to the following questions?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many temporary and permanent staff members did the Northern Ireland Office hire between September 2017 and September 2018? 2. How many of the staff members hired between September 2017 and September 2018 held citizenship with a country within the European Union, excluding the UK and Northern Ireland? 3. How many temporary and permanent staff members did the Northern Ireland Office hire between September 2012 and September 2013? 4. How many of the staff members hired between September 2012 and September 2013 held citizenship with a country within the European Union, excluding the UK and Northern Ireland?
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>In respect of question 1 and question 3, I can confirm that the department holds information that you have asked for. The information is exempt under section 21 of the FOI Act because it is reasonably accessible to you, and I am pleased to inform you that you can access it via the following links:</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/723162/ANN</p>

	<p>UAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2017-18.pdf</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/211915/NIO_Annual_Report_Annual_Accounts_2012-13.pdf</p> <p>In response to question 2 and question 4, 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>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/237
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>[PERSONAL DATA REDACTED], you will recall that we raised serious concerns around the SEHSCT Trusts interpretation of Quality Standards (Assessment and Care Management SSI 1999), particularly in relation to the issue of holistic assessments and the Departmental view on the standing of the Trust policy in relation to this matter.</i></p> <p><i>You will further recall that our concerns arose from comments in an Investigation Report by the Ombudsman.</i></p> <p><i>I would also like at this time to make request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) for</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. The Quality Standards document carries a foreword by the then Minister I now request</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) copy of briefing(s)/submission(s) made to the Minister in relation to the initial scoping and associated consultation process involved in the preparation of the Standards</i> <i>and</i> <i>b) submission /briefing (including the usual 'lines to take') to the Minister in advance of the release/publication of these Standards</i>

	<p>2. <i>Copy of the Consultation itself including the initial request for responses issued to consultees, responses from consultees and casework or similar seeking approval for the release & implementation of the Quality Standards post completion of the consultation process.</i></p> <p><i>If any of these documents were published but are not currently available on the Dept. website a link to the appropriate archive location will suffice.</i></p> <p><i>I am aware that these Quality Standards may have been superseded but for the avoidance of doubt my interest is currently confined to the 1999 version.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>A search has been conducted for information within scope of your request within the year of 1999 and I can confirm that no information is held.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/241
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<i>How many organizations and individuals (including charities) have signed documents containing phrases requiring the paying the utmost regard to the standing and reputation of the Department's Secretary / Minister or to not do anything which may attract adverse publicity to him/her, damage his/her reputation, or harm the public's confidence in him/her?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>Freedom of information 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 a request (section 12 FOIA).</p> <p>We have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as 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 different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the broad scope of your request we consider this would cost over £600. Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request by providing a shorter timeframe/date range or more specific types of stakeholders.</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 number of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request.

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- (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
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Guidance

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- £600 for central government and Parliament.
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- 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/18/242
Month Issued	October 2018
Request	<p><i>I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act. I would like to ask the following questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>How many FOI requests did you decline on 'cost' basis this year?</i> 2. <i>How many have you declined on 'cost' basis last year?</i> <p><i>To be clear – what I mean by cost basis – is because it was deemed too expensive for your department to investigate.</i></p>

Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>1. How many FOI requests did you decline on 'cost' basis this year?</p> <p>I can confirm that the department holds information that you have asked for, but it is exempt from disclosure because it is intended for future publication.</p> <p>We are not obliged to provide information that is intended for future publication. In line with the terms of section 22 of 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, I have concluded that the public interest favours withholding the information.</p> <p>2. How many have you declined on 'cost' basis last year?</p> <p>I can confirm that the department holds information that you have asked for. The information is exempt under section 21 of the FOI Act because it is reasonably accessible to you, and I am pleased to inform you that you can access it via the following link:</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/702102/foi-statistics-q4-2017-and-annual-statistical-tables.xls</p> <p>Section 21 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>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/227
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<i>Please can you disclose any letters the secretary of state has received from members of the public or lobby groups about legalising abortion in Northern Ireland, excluding emails, from May 26 to the end of June of this year?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>We have conducted a thorough search of our records, and the relevant correspondence is attached.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/238																								
Month Issued	November 2018																								
Request	<p><i>I wish to seek the following information:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A monthly breakdown of the number of official days spent by the Secretary of State in Northern Ireland between 1st January 2018 and October 1st 2018.</i> 																								
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>Please find below a monthly breakdown of the number of days spent by the Secretary of State in Northern Ireland. The Secretary of State has spent 42 official days in Northern Ireland between 1st January 2018 and 1st October; official engagements do not include personal engagements in NI (this is 15 additional days) and trips elsewhere on behalf of NIO to promote Northern Ireland.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Total (official days)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Total (official days)	January	7	February	9	March	3	April	2	May	5	June	4	July	4	August	0	September	8	October	3	November	3
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/239
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<p>1. <i>Do you have any guidance or policy for the public or service users to record calls when they speak to your staff your call centres or in person? Do you Inform The Public Users they can record. If the answer is no what is the reason for this please if so do send me a copy of why you don't inform the callers they can record but not to publish a call.</i></p>

2. *if You have a Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and Procedure can you tell me if one of these are to object to telephone calls being recorded by the caller due to it being not necessary or unwanted or indeed the staff member feels threatened can you explain why you would have such Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and Procedure that goes against current uk law. If there is no policy why not or how do I find out why? The Public need to record all calls to help them in cases where public servants have lied or due to lack of training make these customers disadvantaged in some way. Is being vexatious unacceptable behaviour how many times have you used this policy in a case and finally the landmark ruling in this case Dransfield vs Exeter Council is it fair to blame a person for being vexatious rather than just simply leaving their name out of it as an example Mr blogs commits fraud then the fraud policy is called Mr blogs.*
3. *Are your staff the majority of them who answer public calls or when meeting a member of public are staff aware of the policies and the laws ref telephone recordings using the relevant laws laid down by legislation. if the answer is no why not. This sort of training awareness is needed as most call centres social workers teachers police members of parliament are not aware recordings are aloud will you highlight the public is ok to record a 2 way call or will you let the confusion continue.*
4. *If you have no policy advice or framework for the above will you develop a policy etc if there is a policy send me one pls. Will you encourage the public to record a 2 way conversation if the answer is no why not.*
5. *What are your organizations views on charging the public in FOI requests and data protection and subject access requests should their information request be free.*

What happens in a situation a benefit claimant or non-waged person needs information what do you do to help them or someone who has no spare income. Is it fair if the public record you then they should charge you for a copy of the recording or video the same fee you charge them. Any tips and comments will help the public understand the UK public servants and business policies ref this subject.
6. *What do you do and what is your policy when a serious complaint against a staff member is made when a person complains about wrong doing and has evidence of foul play in your organization will you accept covertly or permission based Audio or video evidence in the case. We know you have a complaints policy does this include this question.*

Do you Fully investigate under public interest laws and take note of any criminal charges. if the answer is no why not. Do send me a copy of the policy.

Response

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

	<p>I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within the scope of questions 1, 2, 3 and 5.</p> <p>In respect of question 4, I can confirm that the department does not charge for Freedom of Information or Subject Access Requests.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/23/240
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Are Service Users or the general public allowed to audio-visually record meeting and calls with your staff? If so, do they require permission or are they permitted to do so covertly?</i> 2) <i>Do you have any guidance or policy for the public or service users to record calls when they speak to your staff?</i> 3) <i>What is your organisations protocol on service users recording calls when they speak to your staff or call centres? Please provide a copy of your policy, procedure and guideline notes on this issue.</i> 4) <i>Do you Inform Users they can record. If the answer is no what is the reason for this please if so do send me a copy.</i> 5) <i>Are service users made aware of their right to record the encounter, if they choose to do so? Is this reflected in you policy document on the matter?</i> 6) <i>Does your organisation have an "Unacceptable Behaviour" policy? If so, please can you provide me with a copy? Regarding court staff the public or the court itself.</i> 7) <i>If such a policy contains points of objectionable behaviour such as telephones calls being recorded by the caller due to them being not necessary or unwanted or needed, and furthermore the staff members may feel threatened or apprehensive, are you aware that denying users the right to record calls goes against the current UK laws.</i> 8) <i>Are your policies and procedures compliant with the public right to audio-visually record encounters with your staff, without their consent? If not, will you provide appropriate training for your staff so they are fully informed of the Public right to record?</i>

	<p>9) <i>What is our organisations current charging policy for Freedom of Information requests (FOI) or Subject Access Requests (SAR)? If charges are applied are concessions available for those on low income or students?</i></p> <p>10) <i>What is your organisations complaints policy? Please can you forward me a copy? Does your complaints procedure permit service users evidence such as covert call recordings to form part of the investigation?</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>I can confirm that questions 1, 4, 5 and 8 have not been processed as they are not valid FOI requests.</p> <p>No information within scope is held in respect of questions 2, 3, 6, 7 and 10. However, if a letter of complaint were to be received it would be fully investigated by the appropriate manager.</p> <p>I can confirm that no charges are applied in relation to information requests.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/243
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Please can you tell me how much has been spent on travel to Brussels, accommodation in Brussels and other expenses such as meals since January 2015?</i> • <i>Please list the amount spent for each trip since January 2015 and for expenses other than travel or accommodation please list what the expense was for.</i> • <i>Please tell me how many staff members this spend has covered for each trip since January 2015. If possible, please also give the staff members' job titles.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)</p> <p>As 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 can take into account when making this calculation, but you may be interested to know that the limit is equivalent to 3 ½ working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour.</p>

	The Department does not hold information on travel in a format that would allow the information you have requested to be provided without incurring disproportionate cost. It is therefore not possible to supply this information at this time.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/244
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, I am requesting the following information:</i></p> <p><i>(1) Please provide details of the planned expenditure for your department's Christmas party (please also break this down by item, e.g. alcohol, soft drinks, canapés)</i></p> <p><i>(2) Please provide details of the location of the party and the guest list (how many people were invited and who, as well as how many of those invitees have accepted).</i></p> <p><i>(3) If the above requests haven't taken this FOI request to the spending limit, please also provide details of the amount and expenditure on wine, beer and spirits since 2015.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>(1) Please provide details of the planned expenditure for your department's Christmas party (please also break this down by item, e.g. alcohol, soft drinks, canapés)</p> <p>The Department is not planning a Christmas party.</p> <p>(2) Please provide details of the location of the party and the guest list (how many people were invited and who, as well as how many of those invitees have accepted).</p> <p>As above, we are not planning a Christmas party.</p> <p>(3) If the above requests haven't taken this FOI request to the spending limit, please also provide details of the amount and expenditure on wine, beer and spirits since 2015.</p> <p>The Department has incurred £1,246.60 on wine since 2015. This is the total expenditure on wine, beer and spirits during this period and is not specific to Christmas parties.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/245
Month Issued	November 2018

Request	<p><i>I would like to ask some questions about Non-Disclosure Agreements under the terms of the FoI Act.</i></p> <p><i>My questions are as followed.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. How many NDAs have people or organisations agreed as part of their dealing with the department so far in 2018?</i> <i>2. How many NDAs did people or organisations agree as part of their dealing with the department in 2017?</i> <i>3. How many NDAs did people or organisations agree as part of their dealing with the department in 2016?</i> <i>4. IF POSSIBLE: Please provide the names of the parties each NDA was agreed by.</i> <i>5. IF POSSIBLE: Please provide the reason why each NDA was proposed, EG commercial sensitivity, national security etc.</i> <p><i>NOTE: If questions 4 and 5 would take too long to answer the FoI please still answer 1, 2 and 3.</i></p>
Response	In the years 2016 and 2017, no NDAs were agreed with either people or organisations and this department.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/246
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act can you provide me with the following information:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) How many drug tests on staff you have carried out over the last four calendar years, broken down by year</i> <i>2) How many of these were positive (broken down by year)</i> <i>3) Please provide a breakdown of the drug/drugs discovered in the positive tests.</i> <i>4) How many times drugs have been found in the department - what drugs and what year - over the last four years</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Office has not carried out any drugs tests on staff in the last four calendar years. No drugs have been found in the department over the last four years.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/247
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<p><i>As per the FOI Act, I would like to request specific information from your organisation regarding the IT software estate currently in place.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What is the current number of staff who use a PC or a laptop within your organisation?</i> <i>2. What are the current Microsoft software licences (server and desktop) that you are using?</i>

	<p>3. <i>What is your annual IT spend on Microsoft licences?</i></p> <p>4. <i>Has your organisation moved, or is planning to move, to the Cloud in the next 12 months?</i></p> <p>5. <i>Are you due to undertake a review of your software estate in the next 12 months?</i></p> <p>6. <i>What is the name of the decision maker for IT spend in your organisation?</i></p>
<p>Response</p>	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>In relation to question one the Northern Ireland Office has 183 laptops currently issued.</p> <p>In relation to question two, four and five, 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 sections 31(1)(a) and 31(3)(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> <p>In relation to question three, the Northern Ireland Office receives managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland. The information requested is, therefore, not held by this Department. This information may be available from the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland who can be contacted at foi@finance-ni.gov.uk</p> <p>In relation to question six, Personal data may be disclosed in response to an FOI request if its disclosure will not contravene any of the data protection principles of the Data Protection Act. Where disclosure would be inconsistent with any of those data protection principles, the personal data is exempt from disclosure by virtue of section 40 of the FOIA. The relevant principle to consider in the instance is the first data protection principle, which states that personal data shall be processed</p>

	<p>fairly and lawfully and shall not be processed unless a condition in schedule 2, and for sensitive personal data, also a condition in schedule 3 of the DPA is met.</p> <p>In this case I judge it would be unlawful/unfair to disclose this personal data because those concerned would not be aware of the disclosure or that their data was to be disclosed in this manner. All individuals have a clear and strong expectation that their personal data will be held in accordance with the DPA and not disclosed to the public under the FOIA. The first data protection principle would therefore be breached therefore the schedules or further principles do not need to be considered.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/248
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<p><i>I write to ask for information under the freedom of information act.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>For each of the last 10 financial years, and the current financial year to 18.10.18 please state:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The number of legal disputes between your department and other central government departments and non-departmental government bodies.</i> <p><i>For each, please provide</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>A list of the court cases related to the dispute, with current status (resolved or ongoing)</i> - <i>Total time period of the dispute from bringing of proceedings until conclusion.</i> - <i>Total cost in legal fees and related administration costs to your department</i> 2. <i>For each of the last 10 financial years, and the current financial year to 18.10.18 please supply the number of legal disputes between yours department and a UK local council (including district, county, borough, unitary, parish).</i> <p><i>For each, please provide</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>A list of the court cases related to the dispute with current status (resolved or ongoing)</i> - <i>Total time period of the dispute from bringing of proceedings until conclusion.</i> - <i>Total cost in legal fees and related administration costs to your department.</i> 3. <i>For each of the last 10 financial years, and the current financial year to 18.10.18 please state the number of legal disputes between your department and a regional mayoral department.</i> <p><i>For each, please provide</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>A list of the court cases related to the dispute, with current status (resolved or ongoing)</i> - <i>Total time period of the dispute from bringing of proceedings until conclusion.</i> - <i>Total cost in legal fees and related administration costs to your department</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The law, specifically Section 12(1), 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>We regret to advise that your request has been declined on these grounds.</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>In order to determine whether the Department holds any records which fall within the scope of the request, officials across the Department would be required to locate, analyse and extract a large number of records. The cost of doing so would engage the cost limits outlined above. Although we cannot answer your request, we might be able to answer a refined request within the cost limit, for example a shorter period of time. However, please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit, or may engage one or more FOIA exemptions.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/249
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to know how much money your department has spent on Brexit-related consultancy services</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)</p> <p>The Department has spent £16,902 on consultancy services for work related to the UK leaving the EU. This work covered research into many aspects of the economy in Northern Ireland, and only a portion of this work related directly to the impact of EU Exit.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/250
Month Issued	November 2018

Request	<p><i>I would like to know if your department and associated agencies make use of algorithms, machine learning or artificial intelligence for any of its functions, and how they use these tools.</i></p> <p><i>Please could you also provide details of any risk assessments that have been carried out ahead of use.</i></p> <p><i>I am making this request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Office receives managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland. The information requested is, therefore, not held by this Department. This information may be available from the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland who can be contacted at foi@finance-ni.gov.uk.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/251
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<p><i>I would like to make the following individual requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The number of staff (full-time equivalent) in the team responsible for Freedom of Information requests on 31 March 2010</i> • <i>The number of staff (full-time equivalent) in the team responsible for Freedom of Information requests on 31 March 2018</i> <p><i>And if the cost limit is not reached, also:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The number of staff (full-time equivalent) in the team responsible for Freedom of Information requests on 31 March 2011</i> • <i>The number of staff (full-time equivalent) in the team responsible for Freedom of Information requests on 31 March 2012</i> • <i>The number of staff (full-time equivalent) in the team responsible for Freedom of Information requests on 31 March 2013</i> • <i>The number of staff (full-time equivalent) in the team responsible for Freedom of Information requests on 31 March 2014</i> • <i>The number of staff (full-time equivalent) in the team responsible for Freedom of Information requests on 31 March 2015</i> • <i>The number of staff (full-time equivalent) in the team responsible for Freedom of Information requests on 31 March 2016</i> • <i>The number of staff (full-time equivalent) in the team responsible for Freedom of Information requests on 31 March 2017</i>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

The Northern Ireland Office has been in a shared service arrangement with the Wales Office for the provision of FOI services since 2013. We do not hold information of the number of full time equivalents being responsible for FOI's prior to 31 March 2013, however the number of staff (full time equivalent) responsible for FOI requests between the 31st March 2014 to 31st March 2018 is shown below: -

Year	Number of FTE Staff
31 st March 2014	1.4
31 st March 2015	1.4
31 st March 2016	1.4
31 st March 2017	1.5
31 st March 2018	1.5

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/252		
Month Issued	November 2018		
Request	<p><i>I am sending this request under the Freedom of Information Act to ask for the following information:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) Please provide figures for the number of employees in your government department (including catering and cleaning staff if possible) broken down by ethnicity within each pay band.</i> <i>2) Please provide figures for the numbers of employees in your government department (including catering and cleaning staff if possible) broken down by ethnicity within each internal department (e.g. Finance, HR, Policy areas etc).</i> <i>3) Please provide figures for the numbers of employees in your government department (including catering and cleaning staff if possible) broken down by ethnicity within each combination of pay band and internal department (e.g. Finance, HR, Policy areas etc).</i> <i>4) Please also provide a breakdown of pay bands as they relate to job titles in your area.</i> 		
Response	<p><i>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</i></p> <p><i>In response to Q1 please see the table below showing the breakdown by ethnicity within each pay band.</i></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Ethnicity - Numbers by Grade</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ethnicity - Numbers by Grade	
Ethnicity - Numbers by Grade			

	White	Asian Indian	Asian Pakistani	Mixed Asian & White	Mixed Black African & White	Mixed Black Caribbean & White	Other Asian Background	Not Known/prefer not to Say
SCS	10	0	<5	0	0	0	0	<5
A	20	0	0	<5	0	0	0	13
B	11	0	0	0	<5	0	0	10
C	11	<5	0	0	0	0	0	7
D	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	<5
E	5	0	0	0	0	<5	0	<5

Please note that we do not employ catering or cleaning staff.

In response to Questions 2 and 3, 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.

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 and where the figures are fewer than 5 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.

In response to Question 4 please see the table below showing the breakdown of pay bands as they relate to job titles. We do not hold the information in the format that has been requested so have provided the broad business.

	Deputy Director	Director	Permanent Secretary				
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	Senior Civil Servant	10	<5	<5				
		Policy Delivery	Operational Delivery	Finance	Human Resources	Knowledge and Information	Communications	Business Support
	Band A	21	7	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
	Band B	12	5	<5	<5	<5	<5	0
	Band C	8	<5	<5	0	<5	0	0
	Band D	<5	7	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
	Band E	<5	<5	0	0	<5	<5	<5
<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) as we do not have access to their information.</p>								

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/253
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<p>Under the FOI Act, I am seeking the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All records, to include emails and correspondence, relating to the European Commission's proposed abolition of bi-annual clock changes (summer time/winter time) and its potential impact.
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>I can confirm that the department holds information that you have asked for, but it is exempt from disclosure.</p> <p>We are not obliged to provide information if it relates to the formulation of government policy. In this case, the information is exempt under section 35(1)(a) of the Freedom of the Information Act.</p> <p>Section 35(1) (a) protects information relating to the formulation or development of government policy. We have considered the public interest in disclosing this information. There is a public interest in the way in which government decisions are made and how relationships with other stakeholders are conducted. Disclosure would help the public to appreciate the</p>

considerations surrounding policy discussions, and the context in which Ministers operate. There is also a public interest in how decisions are made, at what level, and the reasons behind these decisions so that government officials can be more accountable for their decisions and responsibilities.

Release of the information could demonstrate the quality of advice provided by the Department. However, these factors are of modest weight in this case, as the NIO proactively publishes information about the Departmental structure, Ministers make regular statements to Parliament (both oral and in writing) on policy issues - setting out rationale and responding to questioning along those lines, and make themselves available for frequent media engagement. The department also responds to public inquiries on a range of matters through Treat Officials and Minister's Cases, and undertakes structured engagement with a wide range of relevant interlocutors.

After careful consideration we have concluded that s35(a) is engaged and it is in the public interest to withhold the documents.

In line with the terms of this exemption in the Freedom of Information Act, we have also considered whether it would be in the public interest for us to provide you with the information, despite the exemption being applicable. In this case, we have concluded that the public interest favours withholding the information.

If you require further guidance on S.35 please refer to the guidance at the end of this template and the ICO guidance on 'section 35' at:

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

Alternatively, you can find the full MoJ guidance on exemptions is available at:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/information-access-rights/foi-guidance-for-practitioners/exemptions-guidance>

You can find out more about Section 35 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/35>

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

- The value of transparency in public policy making, especially of issues related to Brexit.

Public interest considerations favouring withholding the information

- The safe space argument is relevant in this case, and is strongest when the issue is current/live or in the early stages, which is a factor here. The weight of this factor will diminish over time.
- Collective responsibility is a factor as some of the material relates to individual write round responses on government policy. The correspondence of Cabinet Committees is also generally expected to remain exempt, and the material we hold relates to those processes. This is likely to remain a factor in disclosure considerations.

We reached the view that, on balance, the public interest is better served by withholding this information under Section 35 of the Act at this time.

EXPLANATION OF FOIA - SECTION 35 – FORMULATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

We have provided below additional information about Section 35 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 35: Formulation of government policy

- (1) Information held by a government department or by the Welsh Assembly Government is exempt information if it relates to—
- (a) the formulation or development of government policy,
 - (b) Ministerial communications,
 - (c) the provision of advice by any of the Law Officers or any request for the provision of such advice, or
 - (d) the operation of any Ministerial private office.

- (2) Once a decision as to government policy has been taken, any statistical information used to provide an informed background to the taking of the decision is not to be regarded—
- (a) for the purposes of subsection (1)(a), as relating to the formulation or development of government policy, or
 - (b) for the purposes of subsection (1)(b), as relating to Ministerial communications.
- (3) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to information which is (or if it were held by the public authority would be) exempt information by virtue of subsection (1).
- (4) In making any determination required by section 2(1)(b) or (2)(b) in relation to information which is exempt information by virtue of subsection (1)(a), regard shall be had to the particular public interest in the disclosure of factual information which has been used, or is intended to be used, to provide an informed background to decision-taking.
- (5) In this section—
- “government policy” includes the policy of the Executive Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the policy of the Welsh Assembly Government;
- “the Law Officers” means the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, the Advocate General for Scotland, the Lord Advocate, the Solicitor General for Scotland, the Counsel General to the Welsh Assembly Government and the Attorney General for Northern Ireland;
- “Ministerial communications” means any communications—
- (a) between Ministers of the Crown,
 - (b) between Northern Ireland Ministers, including Northern Ireland junior Ministers, or
 - (c) between members of the Welsh Assembly Government
- and includes, in particular, proceedings of the Cabinet or of any committee of the Cabinet, proceedings of the Executive Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly, and proceedings of the Cabinet or any committee of the Cabinet of the Welsh Assembly Government;
- “Ministerial private office” means any part of a government department which provides personal administrative support to a Minister of the Crown, to a Northern Ireland Minister or a Northern Ireland junior Minister or any part of the administration of the Welsh Assembly Government providing personal administrative support to the members of the Welsh Assembly Government;
- “Northern Ireland junior Minister” means a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly appointed as a junior Minister under section 19 of the M1 Northern Ireland Act 19

Guidance

Section 35 is aimed at protecting the policy-making process in order to maintain the delivery of effective government. It only applies to government departments (including a Northern Ireland Government Department) and the Welsh Assembly Government.

	<p>Section 35 covers information that 'relates to':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formulation or development of government policy • ministerial communications • provision of advice by any of the Law Officers • the operation of ministerial private offices <p>Information 'relating to' one of the categories above will include the substantive information falling within the description, for example, information which describes a new government policy, or is contained in a ministerial communication. It will also include other information which is about that information.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/254
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<i>Please could I have the information on how many times, Karen Bradley, Shailesh Vara and Lord Duncan have made official visits to Northern Ireland since their appointments to the department, and what the nature of the visit was.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The Secretary of State has spent 45 official days in Northern Ireland in her capacity as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Minister Shailesh Vara has spent 24 official days in Northern Ireland in his capacity as Minister of State for Northern Ireland. Lord Duncan of Springbank has spent 16 official days in his official capacity as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. This is alongside Parliamentary and Constituency commitments.</p> <p>Details of ministerial meetings and engagements are published on a quarterly basis and can be found at the following link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=northern-ireland-office.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/255
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<p><i>I am writing to make a request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</i></p> <p><i>I'd like the recorded number of complaints of bullying made by staff in the Northern Ireland Office in 2018, 2017 and 2016.</i></p>
Response	I can advise you that no recorded complaints have been made from staff members about bullying in 2018, 2017 and 2016.

	<p>The departmental policy on bullying, harassment and discrimination is available to all staff and included in our induction of new staff.</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Office takes a zero tolerance approach to any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination and has confidential support available for anyone who wants to discuss any concerns.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/256
Month Issued	November 2018
	<p><i>On the 24th October 2016 the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland attended Downing Street for talks on Brexit as part of the Joint Ministerial Committee.</i></p> <p><i>In relation to the First Minister of Northern Ireland and any of her Special Advisors, can you provide;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>An itemised list of expenses for this trip</i> - <i>A list of SpAds whom also travelled on this trip along with the First Minister</i> - <i>A timed itinerary for the trip</i> - <i>Any correspondence in relation to this trip</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Office does not hold this information.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/257
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<p><i>I would like to submit a Freedom of Information request which relates to the organisation's Wi-Fi contract(s) especially around managed guest and visitor Wi-Fi.</i></p> <p><i>Please can you send me the following contract information?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Wi-Fi Provider- Who is the contracted supplier for the Wi-Fi contract.</i> 2. <i>Average Annual Spend – Please state the annual average spend over three years for each supplier. If this is a new contract please state the estimate annual average spends. If there is more than one Wi-Fi provider please split annual for each individual provider.</i> 3. <i>Number of Wi-Fi Users- Please state the number of users the Wi-Fi contract is in place for. An estimate number of users will also be acceptable. If there is more than one Wi-Fi provider please state the number of users for each individual provider.</i>

4. *What is the contract Type: 1. Wi-Fi= Wi-Fi contract, 2. Managed=Part of a larger contract, 3. In-house=is the Wi-Fi managed and maintained in-house.*
5. *Number of Locations/Site- I require the number of locations/sites the Wi-Fi contract is contracted for. If there is more than one Wi-Fi provider please state the number of sites for each individual provider.*
6. *End User Offer- What the Wi-Fi offers to the end users e.g. Unlimited, Pay as you go, free 1 hour access or just free access. If there is more than one Wi-Fi provider please state the number of sites for each individual provider.*
7. *Manufacturer Name/Brand- Please provides me with the brand names of the Wi-Fi equipment which many include manufacturers of the access points and routers. If there is more than one Wi-Fi provider please state the Manufacturers Name for each individual provider.*
8. *Contract Description- Please provide me with a brief description of the solution in place for Wi-Fi and any other services provided under the contract. If there is more than one Wi- Fi provider please state the contract description for each individual provider.*
9. *Actual Contract Start Date- Please can you state the Start date of the contract. If there is more than on Wi-Fi provider please split contract dates for each individual provider.*
10. *Actual Contract Renewal/Expiry Date- Please can you state the renewal/expiry date of the contract. If the contract is coming up for renewal if possible please state the likely outcome of the Wi-Fi contract.*
11. *Contact Details- I require the person from within the organisation responsible for the Wi-Fi contract. Can you please provide me with their full contact detail including contact number and an email address? If there is more than one Wi-Fi provider please state the contract details for each individual provider.*

If the organisation doesn't have a Wi-Fi contract in place please state when the organisation plans to have a Wi-Fi contract in place. Please do this by providing me with a month and year and if possible what type of solutions they plan to want in place and the number of locations.

If this service is provided in-house please provide me with:

1. *Number of Users*
2. *Number of Locations/Site*
3. *End User Offer*
4. *Manufacturer Name/Brand*
5. *Contact Details- I require the person from within the organisation responsible for the Wi-Fi*

If the organisation has this service (Wi-Fi) as part of a managed service please can you provide me with the contract details of the managed contract including:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Current Provider</i> 2. <i>Number of Users- This is normally the total number of staff with the organisation.</i> 3. <i>Contract Description- Please can you provide me with a brief contract description of the overall contract.</i> 4. <i>Contract Expiry Date- Please</i> 5. <i>Contract Review Date</i> 6. <i>Contact Details- I require the person from within the organisation responsible for the Wi-Fi contract. Can you please provide me with their full contact detail including contact number and an email address.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Office receives managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland. The information requested is, therefore, not held by this Department. This information may be available from the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland who can be contacted at foi@finance-ni.gov.uk</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/258
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<p><i>I am researching information relating to the outsourced Facilities Management services and contract(s) that are being delivered across the departmental estate. To provide the necessary background information, please can you provide the following information relating to the contracts in place:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Does the Department / Executive Agency outsource Facilities Management services to a third party?</i> 2. <i>Could you state whether the contracts are soft FM, hard FM or Total FM?</i> 3. <i>Could you specify what services are provided under this contract? A brief description will be acceptable.</i> 4. <i>Could you provide the month and year of the contract s start and expiry? Could you also provide me with and any extensions that may be offered to the supplier?</i> 5. <i>Could you provide the annual £ value of the contract?</i> 6. <i>Could you state the provider of the contract?</i> 7. <i>Could you provide the information on the size of the estate (in sq. m or sq. ft.)? An estimate will also be acceptable.</i> 8. <i>Can you please provide me with the total number of sites the contract covers? An estimate will also be acceptable.</i> <p><i>If the contract information provided is going to be expiring within the next 3 months it would be helpful to know if you're going to renew or are planning to go to tender for a new contract for this particular service.</i></p>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

	<p>The answers to your questions are listed below: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes, the department has outsourced FM services. 2. Aspects of both soft FM and hard FM have been outsourced. 3. Services provided include: building management, heating, lighting, cleaning and security. 4. The NIO is a named participant on a collaborative contract procured via a Centre of Procurement Excellence and does not hold these details. 5. The NIO does not hold these details, the Department of finance's Construction and Procurement Delivery section uses collaborative frameworks. 6. Contracts are provided by Noonan and Serco. 7. The size of estate covered by the contract is not held by this department. 8. This information is not held by the department.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/259
Month Issued	November 2018
Request	<p><i>I'd be grateful if you could provide the following information under the Freedom of Information Act.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How many Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) relating to Brexit preparations have been signed between:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and private companies since July 2016;</i> • <i>NIO and trade associations since July 2016?</i> • <i>How much did NIO spend on NDAs relating to Brexit preparations between:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>NIO and private companies since July 2016;</i> • <i>NIO and trade associations since July 2016?</i> • <i>Please provide a breakdown of the reasons for the NDAs relating to Brexit preparations between, for example, for reasons of commercial sensitivity, or for confidentiality related to the British negotiating position:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>NIO and private companies since July 2016;</i> • <i>NIO and trade associations since July 2016?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Office has not signed any Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) with private companies or trade associations in relation to Brexit since July 2016.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/260																								
Month Issued	November 2018																								
Request	<p><i>I wish to make a new request for information, under the Freedom of Information Act, as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A monthly breakdown of the number of official days spent by the Secretary of State in Northern Ireland between 1st January 2018 and October 1st 2018.</i> 																								
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>Please find below a monthly breakdown of the number of days spent by the Secretary of State in Northern Ireland. The Secretary of State has spent 42 official days in Northern Ireland between 1st January 2018 and October 1st October; official engagements do not include personal engagements in NI (this is 15 additional days) and trips elsewhere on behalf of NIO to promote Northern Ireland.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Total (official days)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>January</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>March</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>April</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>June</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Total (official days)	January	7	February	9	March	3	April	2	May	5	June	4	July	4	August	0	September	8	October	3	November	3
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August	0																								
September	8																								
October	3																								
November	3																								

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/261
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<i>I would like to know if the NIO paid compensation to the owner of premises at 39 Upper English St Armagh following a structural fire on the 27th August 1976.</i>
Response	I can confirm that the NIO does not hold any information within the scope of your request.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/262
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>I would like to know the amount of money your department spent on the services of external law firms and barristers for the year ending March 31st 2016 and March 31st 2017</i></p> <p><i>Please exclude legal services provided by the Government Legal Department. However, please include legal services that the Government Legal Department has outsourced to a third party.</i></p> <p><i>You can approximate spending levels, i.e. if you are not able to provide the exact figures, you can give us your best estimate.</i></p> <p><i>Please note that the figure we have requested should exclude spending by your department on the GLD (Government Legal Department) and its predecessor the TSoL (Treasury Solicitor's Department).</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The total figure paid by the Organisation towards the legal services, excluding services provided by Government Legal Services is £295,449.06.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/263
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting the full list of websites which your department excludes for any online advertising you purchase.</i></p> <p><i>Should it not be possible to provide all of this information, I am requesting to know whether any of the following websites have been excluded from your online advertising:</i></p> <p>www.breitbart.com;</p> <p>www.therebel.media;</p> <p>www.thecanary.co;</p> <p>www.evolvepolitics.com;</p> <p>www.politicalite.com</p>
Response	<p>After a search of the NIO's records, I can confirm that the department does not hold information relevant to your request.</p>

	The NIO has not undertaken any online advertising recently, and does not hold a list of any sites that would be excluded if it did.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/264
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>I wish to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act for the following records which I believe to be held by the department</i></p> <p><i>All trips made to Northern Ireland by the following Secretaries of State during their tenure:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Theresa Villiers</i> • <i>James Brokenshire</i> • <i>Karen Bradley</i> <p><i>Please include the date of their arrival and departure and a list of any official engagements.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>Freedom of information 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 a request (section 12 FOIA).</p> <p>We have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as 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 different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the broad scope of your request we consider this would cost over £600. Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request by providing a shorter timeframe/date range or more specific types of stakeholders.</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 number of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request.</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>.

With regards to your request for information of official engagements, ministerial engagements are published on a quarterly basis and can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=northern-ireland-office>

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 consider focusing your request on a narrower range of issues and/or on records produced during a more focussed set of dates.

Please note that, as in this instance, a further 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 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/18/265
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>I hereby request the following under the freedom of information act, a total breakdown of reported incidents of expense fraud within your organisation over the last 3 financial years.</i></p> <p><i>Please break the information down as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Broken down by financial year: FY 15/16, FY 16/17, FY 17/18</i> • <i>In each incident please provide detail on the nature of offence e.g. submitting private lunch receipts</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In each incident please provide information on the outcome e.g. dismissal, written warning</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>I can confirm that there were no reported incidents of expense fraud within the Organisation over the last 3 financial years.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/266
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>The information I require is to do with the organisation's CCTV maintenance and support contract.</i></p> <p><i>Please can you send me the information stated below:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Supplier of the contract for CCTV maintenance and support</i> <i>How much the Orgs spend annually with the supplier? (if multiple suppliers please list the annual spend for each)</i> <i>What is the renewal date of this contract?</i> <i>What is the duration of the contract?</i> <i>What is the review date of this contract? If possible the likely outcome of this review</i> <i>The primary brand of the CCTV equipment. I don't require the model just the brand. If there is various brands could you please list?</i> <i>What is the total number of cameras in use/under this contract?</i> <i>The description of the services provided under this contract. Please state if this contract includes more than just CCTV services.</i> <i>Contact details of the employee responsible for the contract between the supplier and the organisation. Can you please provide me with their full contact details</i> <p><i>If there is no CCTV maintenance contract in place</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What is the brand of CCTV cameras in use? If there is variety could you please send me a list? I do not need the serial number or model just the brand.</i> <i>How much is the average annual spend on the in-house maintenance?</i> <i>How many cameras are in use?</i> <i>Is there a plan to review this at any point, if so what would the date be?</i> <i>Who is in charge of overseeing the in-house maintenance?</i> <p><i>If there is no maintenance contract or in-house maintenance in place, is there an ad-hoc agreement?</i></p>

	<p><i>If yes,</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Who is the supplier? Is this varies could you please list?</i> 2. <i>What is the brand of CCTV cameras in use? If there is variety could you please send me a list? I do not need the serial number or model just the brand.</i> 3. <i>How many cameras are in use?</i> 4. <i>How much is the average annual spend on the ad-hoc agreement?</i> 5. <i>What is the date it is to be reviewed?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>In respect of your questions, 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 sections 31(1)(a) and 31(3)(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/18/267
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>Under Freedom of Information, please provide me with copies of any correspondence (including to but not limited to internal reports / minutes of meetings / briefing papers / emails) that mention 'EU Exit' or 'Brexit' during the month of October 2018.</i></p> <p><i>If not covered in your response to my question above, please also include a copy of the latest minutes of any meeting held of any committees relating to the subject of EU Exit (e.g. the EUFR Programme Board / EU Future Relations Division).</i></p> <p><i>Please also provide me with any submissions made by the department in relation to:</i></p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The Common Travel Areas Paper</i> 2. <i>The EU income stream financial exercise (which outlines the total amount of EU funding received by the department and coming into Northern Ireland)</i> 3. <i>The EU Exit legislation project</i> 4. <i>Finally, I would like a colour copy of the department's latest EU Exit risk register.</i>
<p>Response</p>	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</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.</p> <p>To comply with the request officials would be required to locate, analyse and extract a large number of records. The amount of time required to do this would engage the cost exemption set out above.</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. For example, by reducing the number of individual elements included within your request and by focusing on a more specific timeframe.</p> <p>Please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit, or may engage one or more FOIA exemptions.</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> <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 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 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • retrieving such information or documents • extracting the information from the document containing it.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/268
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>I am sending this request under the Freedom of Information Act.</i></p> <p><i>For your authority's core headquarters department, please state</i></p> <p>1) <i>The total amount spent on team building activities, away days and other social actives designed to foster cohesion among staff in each of the following financial years.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>2013/14</i> b) <i>2014/15</i> c) <i>2015/16</i> d) <i>2016/17</i> e) <i>2017/18</i> f) <i>2018/19 to 13.11.18</i> <p>2) <i>For each of the above years, please provide</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>A list of each team building activity completed by your staff in that year</i> b) <i>The amount spent by your authority on each of these activity in that year</i> c) <i>The number of staff that took part in each activity in that year.</i> d) <i>The accounting line description of the activity.</i> e) <i>A brief description of the activity completed (taken from invoices or other centrally held record, to ensure the request falls within cost. If it is impossible to do this within cost, please disregard this question.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)</p> <p>As 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>

	can take into account when making this calculation, but you may be interested to know that the limit is equivalent to 31/2 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/269
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>Please find enclosed a Freedom of Information request regarding your organisation's 2018/19 pay award.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Name of the unions signatory to your main collective agreement covering pay and conditions.</i> 2. <i>Please state the settlement date of your latest collective pay agreement.</i> 3. <i>Please state the employee groups covered by the pay agreement.</i> 4. <i>Please state the number of employees covered by the agreement.</i> 5. <i>Please provide a copy of your latest pay agreement.</i> 6. <i>Was the latest pay settlement under the remit of the 2018/19 Civil Service pay guidance?</i> 7. <i>Please list the current grades and pay rates together with the previous year's grades and rates for the below roles or their equivalents:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Administrative Assistant (AA)</i> b) <i>Administrative Officer (AO)</i> c) <i>Executive Officer (EO)</i> d) <i>Higher Executive Officer (HEO)</i> e) <i>Senior Executive Officer (SEO)</i> f) <i>Grade 6</i> g) <i>Grade 7</i> 8. <i>Please give details of any individual performance-related increases paid in terms of the percentage of the paybill allocated to fund these awards and please state whether these were consolidated or non-consolidated.</i> 9. <i>Please state the overall paybill increase as a result of the 2018/19 pay settlement (including employer National Insurance and employer pension contributions).</i> 10. <i>Have any other changes been made to terms and conditions as part of the latest pay award?</i> 11. <i>Please provide the name and contact details of the person/s responsible for overseeing your organisation's annual pay negotiations.</i> 12. <i>If an agreement has yet to be reached please state the month in which you anticipate 2018/19 pay increase will be paid.</i>
Response	As a small department, the Northern Ireland Office takes its HR terms and conditions, including pay, from the Ministry of Justice and does not undertake any independent pay negotiations.

	<p>I understand you have also made this request to the Ministry of Justice who will respond on the questions above.</p> <p>In respect of question 9, which relates directly to the Northern Ireland Office, I can advise that the increase in paybill following the pay rise is £38,409 for grades AA - Grade 6/7.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/270
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<i>Please can you tell me how much has been spent on travel to Brussels, accommodation in Brussels and other expenses such as meals since January 2015?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)</p> <p>As 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 can take into account when making this calculation, but you may be interested to know that the limit is equivalent to 31/2 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour.</p> <p>The Department does not hold information on travel in a format that would allow the information you have requested to be provided without incurring disproportionate cost. It is therefore not possible to supply this information at this time.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/271
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act. I am looking for information about non-disclosure agreements signed by staff in relation to severance payments. Please could you provide me with the following:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. How many non-disclosure agreements have staff signed over the past three calendar years (up to and including October 2018)? Please break this down year by year and, if possible, by gender.</i> <i>2. Of those staff members who have signed non-disclosure agreements, how many have made a complaint of bullying and harassment against another member of staff? Please could you break this down year-by-year and categorise by bullying and sexually harassment complaints.</i>

	<p>3. <i>How much money has been spent over the past three calendar years (up to and including October 2018) to settle sexual harassment or bullying allegations made by staff about other staff members? Please could you break this down by year and by type of complaint. Please could you also state whether the settlement did or did not include a non-disclosure agreement.</i></p> <p>4. <i>How many financial settlements have been made with staff over the past three calendar years (up to and including October 2018) in response to allegations of bullying or sexual harassment they have made about other members of staff? Please could you break this down year by year and by type of complaint.</i></p>
Response	<p>In response to your request there have been no non-disclosure agreements signed in relation to severance payments by any members of staff in the Northern Ireland Office.</p> <p>The department takes a zero tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination of any kind and has policies and confidential support in place to allow staff to report any concerns.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/272
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>I write to request the following under the Freedom of Information Act:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Total number of employees in the department.</i> 2) <i>Total number of female employees in the department.</i> 3) <i>Of the total number of workers, the number who work from home.</i> 4) <i>Of the total number of workers, the number who job share.</i> 5) <i>Of the total number of workers, the number who work less than full-time hours.</i> 6) <i>Of the total number of workers, the number who work compressed hours.</i> 7) <i>Of the total number of workers, the number who work under flexi-time rules</i> <p><i>I request all information to be accurate as of 19/11/2018.</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>This information includes staff seconded from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.</p>

	<p>In response to questions 1 and 2, there are a total of 158 employees in the department and the number of female employees is 89.</p> <p>In response to question 3, there are no contractual home workers but some of our members of staff do work occasionally from home.</p> <p>In response to question 4, there are no employees who job share within the Northern Ireland Office.</p> <p>In response to question 5, the total number of employees who work part time in the department is 5.</p> <p>In response to question 6, there are no staff members who work contractual compressed hours however some members of staff have informal arrangements in place to allow them to work compressed hours.</p> <p>In response to question 7, there are 143 members of staff who work under flexi-time rules within the department.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/273
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<i>How many days did James Brokenshire spend in Northern Ireland – in his capacity as Secretary of State – between July 2016 and January 2018?</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>The Northern Ireland Office does not hold this information.</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/275
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>This relates to the UK's commitments to 'no diminution of rights' under the Article 4 of the NI/Ireland Protocol to the draft EU Withdrawal Agreement and the commitment to implement same through 'dedicated mechanisms'</i></p> <p><i>In relation to this commitment Paragraph 176 of the HM Government 'explainer' to the Agreement states:</i></p> <p><i>176. We have agreed to implement the no diminution commitment through a 'dedicated mechanism'. It is intended that this mechanism will draw on the existing human rights and equality bodies established under the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement - namely the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC), the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) and, on issues with an island of Ireland dimension, the Joint Committee - to provide independent oversight of the 'no diminution' commitment. The UK will confer upon NIHRC and ECNI new powers to monitor, supervise, advise and report on and enforce the commitment, as well as provide adequate resources to ensure that they are able to perform their enhanced roles effectively. The UK Government will continue to engage with both Commissions on issues relating to the dedicated mechanism.</i></p>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756376/14_November_Explainer_for_the_agreement_on_the_withdrawal_of_the_United_Kingdom_of_Great_Britain_and_Northern_Ireland_from_the_European_Union_1.pdf

- 1) *What information does the NIO hold in relation to the proposals for the 'dedicated mechanism' in relation to the ECNI, NIHRC & Joint Committee; and*
- 2) *A copy of a policy or similar document setting out the proposed new powers of the NIHRC and ECNI referred to in paragraph 176 above.*

Clarifying that the time period is since June 2018; and that the format of information in relation to request 1 – policy documents, briefings and correspondence, (note unlike request 2 request 1 does not request copies of all of these documents, rather a list of what is held – their titles/descriptions will suffice).

Response

Freedom of information 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 determine whether we can provide the information that has been asked for in a request (section 12 FOIA).

In relation to your request, we have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as to comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such information, officials would be required to open and read documents held by several colleagues and the ministers and their Private Offices, and this would involve a large amount of different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the scope of your request, covering policy documents, briefings and correspondence, even to just collate a list of the documents we may hold within scope of this request, we consider this would cost over £600.

Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request, for example by providing a series of key phrases/terms for us to use in searching our records, or by refining the types of documents or the subjects of the documents you are seeking access to.

You can find out more about Section 12 of the FOIA 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>.

I am sorry that on this occasion the NIO has not been able to process or answer your request.

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

	<p>The appropriate limit</p> <p>The 'appropriate limit', for the purposes of section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act has been set at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £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/18/276
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<i>I request the name and grade of the principle private secretary and the number of international and domestic visits they have taken with to without ministers since the June 2016 EU referendum.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>Freedom of information 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 a request (section 12 FOIA).</p> <p>We have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as 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 different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the broad scope of your request we consider this would cost over £600.</p> <p>In the interest of being helpful with your request, we can provide the following information that is within scope.</p> <p>The current Principal Private Secretary holds a grade of Grade 5/Senior Civil Servant (1).</p> <p>There has been more than one person in the role since the referendum, and this has carried different grades in the past.</p>

Members of ministerial private office both accompany Ministers and senior officials, and travel without ministers as part of the role of the private office. The travel arrangements are assessed in a case by case basis to make most efficient use of staff and budget to meet business needs.

Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request by providing a shorter timeframe/date range or more specific types of stakeholders.

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 number 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. You may wish to consider focusing your request on a narrower range of issues and/or on records produced during a more focussed set of dates.

Please note that, as in this instance, a further 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 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.

Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>I would like to make the following Freedom of Information request to your department, please.</i></p> <p><i>Across the financial year 2017-18, how much money was spent on:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Christmas gifts and other presents such as leaving presents</i> <i>2. Leaving parties, office parties, and any other office celebrations</i> <p><i>If possible, I would like a breakdown of the amount spent on each item in the above list, and what it was. For instance, in the case of a gift, the item and the worth, and for an office party, the reason for the celebration and the cost.</i></p>
Response	I can confirm that no money was spent on gifts/presents or parties/celebrations in 2017-18.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/278
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>I would like to submit a request for information.</i></p> <p><i>Can you please send me an update of the organisation's mobile phone contract.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Network Provider(s) - Please provide me with the network provider name e.g. EE, Telefonica, Vodafone, Three</i> <i>2. Annual Average Spend- Can you please provide me with the average annual spend over the 3 years. If this is a new contract can you please provide the estimated annual spend.</i> <i>3. Number of Connections- Number of connections for each network provider. Please split the connection into the following, Voice Only, Voice and Data and Data. Please provide me with a figure for each one including if the organisation doesn't have any.</i> <i>4. Duration of the contract- please state if the contract also includes contract extensions for each provider.</i> <i>5. Contract Start Date- please can you provide me with the start date of the signed agreement. Please do not provide me with the framework contract date I require the contract dates of the signed agreement.</i> <i>6. Contract Expiry Date- please can you provide me with the expiry date of the signed agreement. Please do not provide me with the framework contract date I require the contract dates of the signed agreement. If the contract is rolling please state.</i> <i>7. Contract Review Date- Please can you provide me with a date on when the organisation plans to review this contract.</i>

	<p>8. <i>The person within the organisation responsible for this particular contract. Can you send me the full contact details Contact Name, Job Title, Contact Number and direct email address for each network provider? If full contact details cannot be provided please send me their actual job title.</i></p>
<p>Response</p>	<p>Freedom of information 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 a request (section 12 FOIA).</p> <p>We have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as 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 different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the broad scope of your request we consider this would cost over £600.</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. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request by providing a shorter timeframe/date range or more specific types of stakeholders.</p> <p>Please note that, as in this instance, a further 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 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(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> <p>The legislation</p> <p><u>Section 1: Right of Access to information held by public authorities</u></p> <p>(1) Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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 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/18/279
Month Issued	December 2018

Request	<i>Could you provide details on the number of internet outages reported to IT departments during the most recent year available. If possible, please detail how long the internet was unavailable to staff for and how many staff were affected by the failure.</i>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).</p> <p>In respect of your question The Northern Ireland Office receives managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland. The information requested is, therefore, not held by this Department. This information may be available from the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland who can be contacted at foi@finance-ni.gov.uk</p>

FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/280
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>Please could you supply me with the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What preparations has the Department made for the event of a no-deal Brexit, over the last two years, broken down by year (if possible)?</i> <i>2. How much does the Department estimate it has spent on no-deal preparations, over the last two years, broken down by year (if possible)?</i>
Response	<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 with a reasonable degree of certainty would require the undertaking of an extensive exercise across the Department to ensure that all NIO e-mail inboxes and other systems are examined. The staff time required to conduct such an exercise would exceed 3.5 working days.</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 number 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. You may wish to consider reducing the scope of the request to correspondence with one particular individual, and/or to officials within one particular branch or team within the Department.</p> <p>Please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit.</p>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/18/283
Month Issued	December 2018
Request	<p><i>I would like to ask for information about apprentices working in departments and agencies of departments under the FOI Act.</i></p> <p><i>1) How many apprentices do you have working in your department or attached agencies?</i></p> <p><i>2) Please provide the job title of each apprentice</i></p> <p><i>3) Please provide the salary of each apprentice</i></p>
Response	<p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</p> <p>In response to your questions and as there are fewer than five apprentices, 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>