

FEBRUARY 2020 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSES

Year	Month	FOI Reference	Topic
2020	Feb	FOI/20/001	Secondments
2020	Feb	FOI/20/002	Travel invoices
2020	Feb	FOI/20/004	Fruitless payments
2020	Feb	FOI/20/005	Staff travel: medium and long haul flights
2020	Feb	FOI/20/006	Correspondence with Moy Park
2020	Feb	FOI/20/009	Spending on branded mugs
2020	Feb	FOI/20/010	Lost or stolen despatch boxes
2020	Feb	FOI/20/012	Spending on public relations and communications
2020	Feb	FOI/20/014	Staff travel: domestic and international flights
2020	Feb	FOI/20/015	Staff absence data
2020	Feb	FOI/20/016	Archival file request: loyalist paramilitaries, security policy and intelligence gathering
2020	Feb	FOI/20/017	Archival file request: Belfast city centre security cordon
2020	Feb	FOI/20/018	Usage of IT devices
2020	Feb	FOI/20/021	Special Adviser expenses
2020	Feb	FOI/20/022	Carrickfergus Town Centre Masterplan: expenditure
2020	Feb	FOI/20/023	Carbon emissions and offsets
2020	Feb	FOI/20/024	Net zero carbon emissions target: impact assessments
2020	Feb	FOI/20/025	Spending on job adverts
2020	Feb	FOI/20/026	Spending on Brexit day celebrations
2020	Feb	FOI/20/027	Information and cybersecurity risk assessments
2020	Feb	FOI/20/028	Archival file request: Robert McGuinness killing
2020	Feb	FOI/20/029	Ministerial vehicles
2020	Feb	FOI/20/031	Bridge project between Northern Ireland and Scotland
2020	Feb	FOI/20/036	Staff based in Scotland: pay data and compulsory redundancies
2020	Feb	FOI/20/037	Bridge project between Northern Ireland and Scotland
2020	Feb	FOI/20/038	Bridge project between Northern Ireland and Great Britain

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/001
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request the following information relating to the personnel from external organisations who have been seconded to work for your department/section of government, between the period January 1, 2018 - January 6, 2020.</i> <i>For each of these secondees, please provide:</i> <i>1. their job title;</i> <i>2. the name of the organisation or body they have been seconded from;</i> <i>3. the group, directorate or branch of your department they work in;</i> <i>4. a brief description of their area of responsibility while on secondment to the department</i> <i>5. Whether the department makes a contribution towards the salary of the seconded</i> <i>6. The start and scheduled end-date of the secondment</i>
Response	In response to questions 1, 3, 4 and 6, 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. In response to question 2, there are a number of organisations from which the secondees are seconded into the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), with the largest number coming from the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). Due to less than five secondees on secondment from other organisations, 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. In response to question 5, the Northern Ireland Office works with the home organisations of the secondees, to ensure salary costs are covered during the secondment period.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/002
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>This is a request under FOIA for copies of the following invoices;</i> <i>Corporate Travel Management - 9/9/2019 - 9177 - £33,233.45</i> <i>Selective Travel Management - 13/9/2019 - NIG0V004655 - £39,870.78</i> <i>If it is unclear from the invoices the reasons for the travel if this could be provided separately.</i> <i>If civil servants below the applicable grade are names on any invoice you are welcome to redact as appropriate</i>
Response	The Act, specifically Section 43, provides that information held by a government department is exempt if its disclosure would prejudice commercial interests. The exemption is qualified, which means it is subject to a public interest test. In deciding whether to disclose the information held, we have considered the following public interest reasons in favour of disclosing the information: • Increase public knowledge about the travel costs incurred • Increase public knowledge about the Northern Ireland Office's relationship with businesses • Increase openness and transparency, which may help increase public confidence. We have balanced this argument in favour of disclosure against the need to: • Ensure the interests of third parties are protected in a commercial environment • Ensure third parties are not discouraged from engaging in future projects We have concluded in this case that the harm that would result from disclosure of the redacted information outweighs the public interest arguments in favour of disclosure. We regret to advise that your request has been declined on these grounds.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/004
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information.</i>

	1. <i>the number of fruitless payments (payments for which liability not to have been incurred or whether the demand for the goods and services in questions could have been cancelled in time to avoid liability) in excess of £30,000 made by or paid for by your department or its predecessor in the following financial years: 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19</i> 2. <i>What each payment was for</i> 3. <i>The value of each payment</i> 4. <i>The reason why the payment was made</i> 5. <i>The reason why the payment was classified as fruitless</i> 6. <i>Whether any disciplinary action was taken as a result of the payment (if there was any disciplinary action, please specify what the action was)</i>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and I can confirm there were no fruitless payments made by or paid for by the Department in the financial years 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/005
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from your department:</i> • <i>The number of medium and long-haul flights taken by departmental staff for the most recent year available.</i> • <i>“Departmental staff” is defined as all ministers, full-time executives, managers, advisors and employees of the department.</i> • <i>“Medium-haul” is defined as flights between 3-6 hours, and “long-haul” is defined as over 6 hours.</i> • <i>If possible, please provide details of the length of flights, the departure airport and the destination (Table 1). If this is not possible, please provide as much information as possible related to the length of the flights (Table 2)</i> • <i>In flight breakdowns, please provide the given time of the journey - e.g. the length of time on the booking - rather than the actual journey time. Please also provide the length of the flight in minutes e.g. 8 hours and 55 minutes would be 535 minutes.</i> • <i>Please provide this information for the most recent four financial quarters available, or for the most recent 12 months available.</i> • <i>If more than one employee travelled on the same flight, please count this as a single flight rather than multiple separate flights.</i> • <i>If a single journey included an in-airport transfer, please consider this one flight rather than two separate flights.</i> • <i>Please include return journeys as two separate flights - e.g. London to New York and New York to London.</i>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Information is attached at Annex A regarding flights we believe met the medium-haul or long-haul threshold.

Annex A

Month	Departure	Arrival
March 2019	London	USA
March 2019	USA	London
July 2019	London	USA
July 2019	London	USA
July 2019	London	USA
July 2019	USA	London
July 2019	USA	London
July 2019	USA	London

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/006
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>I'm writing to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Could you please provide the following:</i> <i>Any correspondence - mail, emails, minutes from phone calls, or notes from meetings - involving former Secretary of State Theresa Villiers and any representatives of Moy Park from 01/01/16 and 13/07/16.</i>
Response	We have conducted a search of our records and I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information relevant to your inquiry.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/009
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>Whitehall departments have previously purchased branded mugs on government campaigns like 'Get Brexit Done' and to promote Britain's entry to the euro.</i> <i>Could you please tell me how much has been spent by your government department on branded mugs since January 2015?</i> <i>Could you furthermore tell me how many have been ordered, the cost of each mug and the manufacturer?</i>

Response	The Northern Ireland Office has not purchased any branded mugs since January 2015.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/010
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>Could you please tell me how many red ministerial boxes have been recorded as lost or stolen from your government department each year for the last five years?</i> <i>Could you please tell me the date they were recorded as lost or stolen, the last known location and the minister to whom they belonged?</i>
Response	We have conducted a thorough search of our records and can confirm the Northern Ireland Office has not recorded any lost or stolen boxes over the last five years.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/012
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>I write to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act relating to public relations and communications.</i> <i>1. The total amount spent by your Department on public relations in 2018-19. This should include but not be limited to the total of 2-4 below;</i> <i>2. The amount spent by your department on its internal press and communications team in 2018-19;</i> <i>3. The amount spent by your department on third party companies to provide any communications and public affairs services in 2018-19 including the following details:</i> <i>4. The name of the companies that your Department has employed;</i> <i>5. The amount of money paid to each company;</i> <i>6. The period for which the company was employed;</i> <i>7. The purpose of your employment of each company.</i> <i>8. The amount spent by your department on advertising, marketing, and publicity campaigns in 2018-19.</i> <i>For the purposes of question 3-4, the work provided can be any public relations service including (but not exclusive to) strategic advice, media training for staff or MPs, work on specific campaigns, media monitoring, communications (internal or external). The work may be carried out by companies which describe themselves as public affairs companies, public relations companies, advertising companies, or none of the above.</i>

	<i>Please note, if 2018-19 is not yet available, I'd be happy for you to replace it in the above with 2017-18.</i>
Response	I can confirm that we hold information within the scope of your request, but in this case we will not be providing it to you as it is exempt from disclosure as section 43 (commercial interest) is engaged. Section 43 provides that information held by a government department is exempt if its disclosure would prejudice commercial interests. The exemption is qualified, which means it is subject to a public interest test. In deciding whether to disclose the information held, we have considered the following public interest reasons in favour of disclosing the information: • increase public knowledge about the public relations role • increase public knowledge about internal press and communications expenditure We have balanced this argument in favour of disclosure against the need to: • ensure the interests of third parties are protected in a commercial environment • ensure third parties are not discouraged from engaging in future projects • ensure that officials can have free and frank conversations in respect of communications and public affairs services We have concluded in this case that the harm that would result from disclosure of the information outweighs the public interest arguments in favour of disclosure.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/014
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act.</i> <i>Please send me:</i> • <i>The number of a) domestic and b) international flight taken by staff in your department in each of the last three calendar years (2017, 2018, 2019).</i>
Response	The table below provides the number of domestic and International flights taken by Departmental staff in each of the three calendar years requested. However, some information regarding flights taken from January to March 2017 is not held as this was under a previous contractual arrangement.

	Calendar Year	Domestic Flights	International Flights
	2017	1736	80
	2018	2407	102
	2019	2368	116

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/015																
Month Issued	February 2020																
Request	<i>I am writing to make an open government request for all the information to which I am entitled under the Freedom of Information Act.</i> <i>Please send me:</i> <i>Please can you provide the total amount of staff hours lost to absence for staff illness in each of the last three calendar years (2017, 2018, and 2019)?</i> <i>Please can you also detail the three main reasons detailed for staff absence.</i>																
Response	Under the Freedom of Information Act I can confirm that we do not hold the information in the format you requested. We are, however, able to provide information on the NIO's annual sickness absence in the format of working days lost. The table below provides this information: <table> <tr> <th>Year</th><th>Working Days Lost</th></tr> <tr> <td>1st January - 31st December 2017</td><td>370</td></tr> <tr> <td>1st January - 31st December 2018</td><td>364</td></tr> <tr> <td>1st January - 30th September 2019 (this is the date that have currently submitted this information to Cabinet Office)</td><td>855</td></tr> <tr> <th colspan="2">Three Main Reasons for Absences</th></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">1. Mental Health</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">2. Respiratory Systems</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">3. Symptoms Ill Defined</td></tr> </table>	Year	Working Days Lost	1 st January - 31 st December 2017	370	1 st January - 31 st December 2018	364	1 st January - 30 th September 2019 (this is the date that have currently submitted this information to Cabinet Office)	855	Three Main Reasons for Absences		1. Mental Health		2. Respiratory Systems		3. Symptoms Ill Defined	
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	For context it should be noted that the Northern Ireland Office grew significantly in 2019.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/016
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>I would like to submit an FOI request for the following files, which I have been instructed are retained by The Northern Ireland Office under section 3 (4) of the Public Records Act 1958, as per my communications with The National Archives. This request pertains to my research relating to the intelligence machinery present in Northern Ireland from 1969 to 1998, and I believe that their release - or any part found therein - would be beneficial to the public good.</i> <i>The files are as follows:</i> <i>CJ 4/2840 - Loyalist paramilitaries: general information and articles</i> <i>CJ 4/2846 - Intelligence arrangements in Northern Ireland: papers and correspondence received by Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Brian Cubbon</i> <i>CJ 4/2910 - Discussions on current security policy: liaison information and articles</i> <i>CJ 4/2058 - The military role in Northern Ireland</i> <i>CJ 4/3102 - Intelligence: possibilities for use for overt information purposes</i> <i>CJ 4/3115 - Intelligence reports and assessments: political developments and paramilitary organisation</i> <i>CJ 4/3565 - Intelligence arrangements in Northern Ireland</i> <i>CJ 4/3720 - Security Policy Meetings: working papers, minutes and associated correspondence</i> <i>CJ 4/3565 - Intelligence arrangements in Northern Ireland</i> <i>CJ 4/4845 - Intelligence organisation and resources</i> <i>CJ 4/4573 - Intelligence in Northern Ireland</i>
Response	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. Some of the information you have requested could be exempt under section 23(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, which relates to the bodies dealing with security matters, although it is also possible that the information relates to none of the bodies dealing with security matters. Sections 23(1) and 24(1) are being cited in the alternative as it is not appropriate, in the circumstances of the case, to say which of the two exemptions is actually engaged so as not to undermine national security or reveal the extent of any involvement, or not, of the bodies dealing with security matters. Section 23 is an absolute exemption and the Northern Ireland Office is not required to consider whether the public interest favours disclosure of this information.

	Any information that is not exempt from disclosure under section 23(1) could be exempt under section 24(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, which exempts information from disclosure if its exemption is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security. For the reasons given above under section 23, we cannot say which of the two exemptions is actually engaged, and to the extent to which section 24(1) is engaged we are not obliged to give any further explanation by virtue of section 17(4) because to do so would involve the disclosure of information which would itself be exempt. Section 24 is a qualified exemption and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours releasing or withholding this information. There is a general public interest in disclosure of information and I recognise that openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government. I have weighed these public interests against a very strong public interest in safeguarding national security. It is important that this sensitive information is protected, as disclosure of information in this case, if held, would damage national security. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case I have determined that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information. Some of the information you have requested could be exempt under section 26(1) or 26(2) of the Freedom of Information Act which relates to information whose disclosure would be likely to prejudice the defence of the British Islands or any colony; or the capability, effectiveness or security of the armed forces of the Crown or any forces co-operating with them. You can find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/23 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/24 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/26 CJ 4/2058 is open at The National Archives so you should visit them or order a copy for access CJ 4/2846, CJ 4/3102, and CJ 4/3115 at the time of the request were part of an audit and re-barcoding exercise with our outsourced provider and as such the review was completed from our electronic metadata rather than by physical recall of the files.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/017
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>I am gathering information about the "Ring of Steel" security cordon placed around Belfast city centre during the Northern Ireland conflict 1972-1994.</i>

	<i>Please can you provide information on the following:</i> <i>Was the NIO responsible for taking the decision to erect the security cordon? If so, when was this decision made?</i> <i>Was the NIO responsible for erecting and manning the cordon? If so, during which period?</i> <i>Was responsibility for the cordon passed to other authorities? If so, to whom and when?</i>
Response	We have conducted a search of our records and I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within the scope of your request.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/018
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>This is an information request pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 relating to electronic devices possessed by your department.</i> <i>1. Please provide the following information:</i> <i>1.1 The total number of mobile telephones presently held by the department.</i> <i>1.1.1 Of this, the portion that has not been used in the past 90 days</i> <i>1.2 The total number of tablets presently held by the department.</i> <i>1.2.1 Of this, the portion that has not been used in the past 90 days.</i> <i>1.3 The total number of laptops presently held by the department.</i> <i>1.3.1 Of this, the portion that has not been used in the past 90 days.</i>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). 1.1/1.1.1 - 213 Phones currently held by the department, 6 Unused in the last 90 days 1.2/ 1.2.1 - 26 Tablets currently held by the department, 2 Unused in the last 90 days 1.3/ 1.3.1 - 330 Laptops currently held by the department, 37 Unused in the last 90 days. This will include laptops that have reached end of life and have been disposed of. This will also include laptops currently awaiting repair or awaiting issue to staff.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/021
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>My Freedom of Information request concerns this department's special advisers.</i>

	<i>The Cabinet Office has told me that some departmental special advisers are allowed expenses, in accordance with each department's different policies.</i> <i>Could you therefore tell please tell me if special advisers in this department are eligible for expenses?</i> <i>Furthermore could you provide me with an itemised list of all expenses for these special advisers from 1 July 2019 to 22nd January 2020, excluding any gifts or hospitality previously declared?</i>
Response	Special Advisers in the Northern Ireland Office are entitled to claim expenses in line with the Department's policies. The total expenses paid to NIO Special Advisers for travel, accommodation and subsistence between 1 July 2019 and 22 January 2020 was £2506.50. In this instance we believe that the release of an itemised list of expenses for each Special Adviser would contravene the first data protection principle and therefore section 40(2) is engaged. The terms of this exemption in the Freedom of Information Act mean that we do not have to consider whether or not it would be in the public interest for you to have the information.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/022
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>Having recently read the proposed 2010 Masterplan for Carrickfergus town centre, virtually none of which has seen the light of day, never mind come to fruition, can you, under the freedom of information act, provide an indicative figure, to date, of expenditure on the project? Or point me in the direction of whoever could?</i>
Response	I can confirm that we do not hold any information relating to the above request regarding a Masterplan for Carrickfergus Town Centre. Local planning decisions are devolved in Northern Ireland and are not the responsibility of the UK Government. We would advise that you make contact with the local council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, who may be able to help you with your query. Details for contacting the council are as follows: Chief Executive's Office Mid and East Antrim Borough Council The Braid 1-29 Bridge Street Ballymena BT43 5EJ

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/023
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>I am writing to request under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) information about carbon emissions and offsets.</i> <i>Please handle my request under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) rather than the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). As you'll be aware, regulation 12(2) of the EIRs states: "A public authority shall apply a presumption in favour of disclosure."</i> <i>I seek data for each year for the last five years available for the below questions:</i> <i>1. Does the department have policies to offset its carbon emissions?</i> <i>2. If yes to Q 1, how many tonnes of CO2 were offset by the department?</i> <i>3. How much did the department spend on said offsetting?</i> <i>4. Which offsetting projects or organisations were used?</i> <i>5. Was there a tendering process to select the offsetting service? Please detail.</i> <i>6. Does the department oblige suppliers or contractors to adhere to its offsetting policy?</i> <i>7. What was the department's total carbon emission footprint?</i> <i>8. How many air miles have been accumulated by the department (department ministers and other staff travelling on business)?</i> <i>9. If the department does not offset its emissions, what measures has it taken to mitigate or reduce its emissions? How much carbon emissions has been saved as a result?</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office and its public bodies are exempt from complying with the Greening Government Commitments (GHG) protocols due to the size of the organisation and budget as it would be disproportionate. While the NIO does not hold the information requested, it does support the GHG Commitments and has taken steps to improve the environmental performance of its own estate and operations. The Department has introduced initiatives such as the use of more energy efficient LED lighting, removal of single use plastic products, investment in new energy efficient boilers, and has taken steps to reduce its energy footprint by cutting down the requirement for staff to travel by making greater use of modern technology to broaden the range of video conferencing facilities.
FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/024

Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>This is an information request relating to the government's net 0 carbon emissions target.</i> <i>Please can you provide the following information for your department:</i> <i>Has your department made any estimate and/or assessment of the financial impact to the department of moving to net 0 carbon emissions? If so, please can you provide this assessment?</i> <i>Has your department made any other assessment of the impact on the department of moving to 0 carbon emissions, and what changes will need to be made at the department?</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office and its public bodies are exempt from complying with the Greening Government Commitments (GHG) protocols due to the size of the organisation and budget as it would be disproportionate. While the NIO has not made any estimate or assessment of the financial impact to the department of moving to net 0 carbon emissions, it does support the GHG Commitments and has taken steps to improve the environmental performance of its own estate and operations. The Department has introduced initiatives such as the use of more energy efficient LED lighting, removal of single use plastic products, investment in new energy efficient boilers, and has taken steps to reduce its energy footprint by cutting down the requirement for staff to travel by making greater use of modern technology to broaden the range of video conferencing facilities.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/025
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:</i> <i>1. The amount spent on job adverts by this department in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20.</i>
Response	The NIO primarily uses the Civil Service's central recruitment portal, Civil Service Jobs, to advertise and recruit against vacancies within the department. Vacancies advertised on Civil Service Jobs are at no cost to the NIO. In parallel to using the Civil Service's Jobs portal, we also often offer secondment opportunities to Northern Ireland Civil Servants (NICS) through their internal recruitment channel, which is also not at a cost to the NIO. The NIO spent £497 on one job advert outside of Civil Service Jobs portal and NICS internal recruitment channel during 2018/19. The department did not spend any money on specific job adverts during 2017/18 or 2019/20.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/026
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Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>Please can you provide the full cost breakdown of the Brexit day (31 January) celebrations by your department? Please include both public-facing and internal events or decorations.</i>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and I can confirm there was no spend in relation to Brexit day celebrations by the Department.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/027
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and relates to how your organisation undertakes information and cyber security risk assessments.</i> <i>Please could you tell me:</i> <i>1. Does your organisation have a formal policy regarding the production of information and or cyber security risk assessments?</i> <i>a. If yes, please can you provide a copy of the above policy?</i> <i>2. Does your organisation hold a register of Information and/or cyber security risk (outside that of the corporate risk register), and if yes:</i> <i>a. Please can you list the top ten Information and/or Cyber Security Risks?</i> <i>b. How many risks are there in total on the register?</i> <i>c. Please state how many risks would be categorised as the highest risk level (i.e. Critical)?</i> <i>d. Please state how many risks would be categorised as the second highest risk level (i.e. Critical)?</i> <i>e. Please state how many risks would be categorised as the third highest risk level (i.e. Critical)?</i> <i>f. How many risk levels do you have in total (i.e. 5)?</i> <i>3. Do any of the identified information and or cyber security risks also exist on the corporate risk register?</i> <i>a. If yes, what are those risks?</i> <i>4. When undertaking an information / cyber security risk assessment, does the authority follow a structured risk assessment process?</i> <i>a. If so, what is that process?</i> <i>5. Does your organisation follow ISO31000 when undertaking an information / cyber security risk assessment?</i> <i>6. Does your organisation hold ISO27000 accreditation?</i> <i>7. Does your organisation have a policy of adhering to any information security standard or framework (i.e. ISO27000, NIST etc)?</i>

	a. <i>If yes, please provide a copy of the above policy?</i> 8. <i>Does the authority have the following roles within the origination:</i> a. <i>Chief Security Officer (CSO),</i> i. <i>If yes, which role does the CSO report into?</i> b. <i>Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)</i> i. <i>If yes, which role does the CISO report into?</i> c. <i>Head of Information Security (Hd InfoSec)</i> i. <i>If yes, which role does the Hd InfoSec report into?</i> 9. <i>Who within your organisation who is accountable for undertaking information / cyber security risk assessments (i.e. Chief Information Security Officer, Head of Information Security, Head of Information Technology)?</i> 10. <i>Who within the authority is responsible for undertaking information / cyber security risk assessments (i.e. Chief Information Security Officer, Head of Information Security, Head of Information Technology)?</i> 11. <i>How many people within the organisation are responsible for undertaking information / cyber security risk assessments?</i> 12. <i>Does the person(s) responsible for undertaking information / cyber security risk assessment:</i> a. <i>Have any formal training in this regard?</i> i. <i>If so, what was it?</i> b. <i>Have any industry qualifications/certification in this regard?</i> i. <i>If so, what are they?</i> 13. <i>How many people (permanent and contractors) currently work for the authority?</i> 14. <i>How many people (permanent and contractors) currently work for the authority in information technology roles?</i> 15. <i>How many people (permanent and contractors) currently work for the authority in information / cyber security roles?</i>
Response	1. We comply with the Cabinet Office guidelines. 2. See Annex A 3. See Annex A 4. We adhere to best practice. 5. We adhere to best practice. 6. No 7. We adhere to best practice. 8. The Director of Business Delivery Group, Colin Perry, has overall responsibility for these roles within the Northern Ireland Office and reports to the Board. 9. As per answer 8 10. As per answer 8. 11. See Annex A

	12. See Annex A 13. 220 14. See Annex A 15. See Annex A <u>Annex A</u> Information you have requested is exempt under section 31(1)(a)(b) and (g) of the Freedom of Information Act. The relevant parts of section 31 exempt information if its disclosure would prejudice the prevention or detection of crime, the apprehension or prosecution of offenders or the exercise by any public authority of its functions for the purpose of ascertaining whether any person has failed to comply with the law. The information contains details about the detection and prevention of crime which would assist criminals to plan and execute criminal acts and to avoid detection. Disclosure would thus make the prevention of certain crimes more difficult and reduce the effectiveness of the police service in detecting the perpetrators. The exemption in Section 31 is a qualified exemption and whether the balance of the public interest favours releasing or withholding this information. There is a general public interest in disclosure of information and I recognise that openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government. I also recognise a public interest in assuring the public that effective arrangements are in place for the prevention and detection of crime. I have weighed these public interests against a strong public interest in the prevention and detection of crime. It is contrary to this public interest to disclose information which would facilitate the commission of crime or hinder its detection. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/028
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>I'm following up on the killing of Robert McGuinness who was shot in Derry in heavily disputed circumstances on June 22, 1973.</i> <i>It's understood that former SDLP leader John Hume's assessment of the killing was lodged with the NIO at the time.</i> <i>Can the NIO provide this information and any other evidence put forward in relation to his death?</i>
Response	We have conducted a thorough search of our records and I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within the scope of your request.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/029
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Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am requesting the following information related to ministerial vehicles which are used for your department. I would be grateful if you would provide the following;</i> <i>1. The number of ministerial vehicles allocated to your department</i> <i>2. The make and model of each vehicle (i.e. Jaguar XF)</i> <i>3. Month and year of first registration for each vehicle</i> <i>4. Fuel type for each vehicle</i> <i>5. CO2 emissions as referenced on the V5c for each vehicle</i> <i>6. Planned date of replacement for each vehicle</i> <i>7. The number of EV charging points at the departments location(s)</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office does not have any Ministerial vehicles.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/031
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>Please can you provide the following information about the project of a bridge between Northern Ireland and Scotland, under the Freedom of Information Act,</i> <i>• If possible, can you provide a projected cost for the project?</i> <i>• How much money has been spent so far on the project?</i> <i>• Have any external organisations been appointed to carry out work? If so which organisations, for what, and how much are their projected costs?</i> <i>• How many meetings are registered in the diaries of ministers or senior officials related to the bridge?</i> <i>• Please provide any correspondence related to these meetings registered in the diaries of ministers or senior officials</i> <i>• Minutes of meetings that were registered in the diaries of ministers or senior officials about the bridge</i> <i>• Please can you provide any drawings of what the bridge might look like that have been produced so far</i>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). In relation to the following questions: <i>• Can you provide a projected cost for the project?</i> <i>• How much money has been spent so far on the project?</i>

- *Have any external organisations been appointed to carry out work? If so which organisations, for what, and how much are their projected costs?*
- *Please can you provide any drawings of what the bridge might look like that have been produced so far?*

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

In relation to the following questions:

- *How many meetings are registered in the diaries of ministers or senior officials related to the bridge?*
- *Minutes of meetings that were registered in the diaries of ministers or senior officials about the bridge?*
- *Please provide any correspondence related to these meetings registered in the diaries of ministers or senior officials?*

I can confirm that the department holds some information that you have asked for, but it is exempt from disclosure under Section 35(1) (a).

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 FOIA.

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.

Public interest considerations in favour of disclosure

While there is a public interest in the way in which government decisions are made and how relationships with other stakeholders are conducted, good government depends on good decision-making and this needs to be based on the best advice available and a full consideration of all the options without fear of premature disclosure of matters that are subject to the ongoing formulation of government policy.

Public interest considerations against disclosure

Ministers and officials also need to be able to conduct rigorous and candid risk assessments of their policies and programmes including considerations of the pros and cons without there being premature disclosure which might close off better options, without the fear that policy proposals will be compromised by premature disclosure.

	After careful consideration we have concluded that s35 (a) is engaged and it is in the public interest to withhold the documents. If you require further guidance on S.35 please refer to the guidance at the end of this letter and the ICO guidance on 'section 35' at https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/2260003/section-35-government-policy.pdf
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/036
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, I request:</i> <i>1. The number of civil servants working for your department in Scotland;</i> <i>2. The number of these civil servants who are paid below the real living wage;</i> <i>3. The number of civil servants in Scotland made compulsorily redundant since 2010 in your department.</i>
Response	In response to your questions, I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not have any Civil Servants working for the Department in Scotland.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/037
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>I would like to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act.</i> <i>In particular I would like to know:</i> <i>1. How many full time equivalent members of staff in the Northern Ireland Office are working on developing policy proposals for a bridge linking Scotland and Northern Ireland?</i> <i>2. Confirmation of whether any initial impact assessment has been done on the policy or is currently underway.</i> <i>3. What budget has been allocated or spent for external work in developing the policy proposal?</i>
Response	In relation to question 1, the NIO is involved in cross-Government discussions regarding the feasibility of a bridge. However, officials work across a broad range of government policies and there are no full time members of staff working exclusively on policy proposals for a bridge between Northern Ireland and Scotland. The department does not categorise and record staff time spent working on different policy areas to the extent you are seeking, within policy teams. There are therefore no records held which respond to your first query.

	In relation to questions 2 and 3 the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information in relation to these questions.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/038
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>Could you please provide me with the following under freedom of information legislation;</i> <i>• A list of work commissioned by government departments to explore the feasibility of a road and/or rail bridge between Northern Ireland and the GB mainland</i> <i>• The cost of any work commissioned</i> <i>• Details of when the work was commissioned</i> <i>• Details of any completed studies on the feasibility of a road and/or rail bridge between Northern Ireland and the GB mainland</i> <i>• Correspondence between ministers and external bodies on the feasibility of the bridge.</i>
Response	In relation to the following questions: <i>• The cost of any work commissioned</i> <i>• Details of any completed studies on the feasibility of a road and/or rail bridge between Northern Ireland and the GB mainland</i> <i>• Correspondence between ministers</i> I can confirm that the Department does not hold any information within scope of your request. In relation to the following questions: <i>• A list of work commissioned by government departments to explore the feasibility of a road and/or rail bridge between Northern Ireland and the GB mainland</i> <i>• Details of when the work was commissioned</i> I can confirm that the department holds some information that you have asked for, but it is exempt from disclosure under Section 35(1) (a).

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 FOIA.

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.

Public interest considerations in favour of disclosure

While there is a public interest in the way in which government decisions are made and how relationships with other stakeholders are conducted, good government depends on good decision-making and this needs to be based on the best advice available and a full consideration of all the options without fear of premature disclosure of matters that are subject to the ongoing formulation of government policy.

Public interest considerations against disclosure

Ministers and officials also need to be able to conduct rigorous and candid risk assessments of their policies and programmes including considerations of the pros and cons without there being premature disclosure which might close off better options, without the fear that policy proposals will be compromised by premature disclosure.

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

If you require further guidance on S.35 please refer to the guidance at the end of this letter and the ICO guidance on 'section 35' at <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/2260003/section-35-government-policy.pdf>.