

APRIL 2020 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSES

Year	Month	FOI Reference	Topic
2020	Apr	FOI/20/019	Ministerial engagement with the Voluntary & Community Advisory Group
2020	Apr	FOI/20/020	Ministerial engagement with the Northern Ireland Business Advisory Group
2020	Apr	FOI/20/049	First day ministerial briefings
2020	Apr	FOI/20/050	Prime Minister's visit to Northern Ireland: briefing papers
2020	Apr	FOI/20/054	Abolition of bi-annual clock changes
2020	Apr	FOI/20/060	Ministerial engagement: abortion services in Northern Ireland
2020	Apr	FOI/20/061	Sectarian incidents on the Catholic community in Larne
2020	Apr	FOI/20/068	Microsoft Office 365: backup policy
2020	Apr	FOI/20/069	FOI Team: staffing and budget
2020	Apr	FOI/20/071	Comfort letters
2020	Apr	FOI/20/072	Archival file request: Belfast city centre security cordon
2020	Apr	FOI/20/073	Remote working resources
2020	Apr	FOI/20/075	Contract register
2020	Apr	FOI/20/076	IT service management contract
2020	Apr	FOI/20/077	Departmental vehicles
2020	Apr	FOI/20/079	Spending on public inquiries

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/019
Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<i>This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act.</i> <i>I am writing to request information on the Voluntary & Community Advisory Group which met with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 15/12/2016. I would like to know the membership of this group, to know how many meetings of the Voluntary & Community Advisory Group were held with any UK Government Minister, and to receive a copy of the minutes of each of these meetings.</i>
Response	With regard to your three specific questions: <u><i>“the membership of this group”</i></u> Please see Annex A. <u><i>“to know how many meetings of the Voluntary & Community Advisory Group were held with any UK Government Minister”</i></u> We do not hold information on meetings with every UK Government Minister. However, we do hold information on meetings with NIO Ministers. Only one meeting took place, and it was on the 15 December 2016. <u><i>“to receive a copy of the minutes of each of these meetings”</i></u> Please see Annex A. The Northern Ireland Office holds information which falls into the scope of your request which is contained in Annex A. Some of this information is exempt from disclosure by virtue of section 36(b)(i) of the FOIA, which sets out that information is exempt from disclosure if disclosure “would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank provision of advice”. This information is exempt under section 36 of the FOIA, which is a qualified exemption, subject to a public interest test. We acknowledge the strong public interest in how Ministers are briefed: an informed and involved public helps to promote good decision-making by public bodies, but those bodies also need a space for free and frank advice, to enable the highest possible quality of decision-making. The release of this information would show the public, in part, how Government ministers are advised by the civil service.

	However, this information was provided with a reasonable expectation that it would not be released into the public domain; it comprises private briefing and advice to enable NIO ministers to contribute fully to collective decision-making, reach their own decisions, and have fruitful interactions with stakeholders. In this instance the public interest in continuing to enable the continued provision of free and frank advice (and thereby allowing ministers to come to the best possible decisions and to be able to properly and meaningfully engage with stakeholders, for example) is stronger than the public interest in disclosing the information. This is because the disclosure of the information in question would hamper the process of advising ministers on sensitive topics in the future. We have therefore concluded that this category of information should not be disclosed. Some of the information which falls into the scope of your request is also exempt from disclosure under section 40 of FOIA. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In this case, I believe disclosure would contravene data protection principle (a), which provides that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and the Northern Ireland Office is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information. Section 40 – Personal information guidance
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/020
Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<i>This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act.</i> <i>I am writing to request information on the NI Business Advisory Group which was formed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 01/09/2016. I would like to know the membership of this group, to know how many meetings of the NI Business Advisory Group were held with any UK Government Minister, and to receive a copy of the minutes of each of these meetings.</i>
Response	<u><i>"the membership of this group"</i></u> The 'core' membership of the group was the Federation of Small Businesses, the CBI, the NI Chamber of Commerce, and the Institute of Directors. <u><i>"to know how many meetings of the NI Business Advisory Group were held with any UK Government Minister"</i></u>

We do not hold information on meetings with every UK Government Minister. However, we do hold information on meetings with NIO Ministers. Meetings of the 'core' Business Advisory Group occurred on the following dates:

- 1 September 2016
- 19 December 2016
- 26 January 2017
- 20 February 2017
- 4 April 2017
- 31 July 2017
- 30 August 2017

"to receive a copy of the minutes of each of these meetings"

Please see Annex A.

The Northern Ireland Office holds information which falls into the scope of your request which is contained in Annex A. Some of this information is exempt from disclosure by virtue of section 36(b)(i) of the FOIA, which sets out that information is exempt from disclosure if disclosure "would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank provision of advice".

This information is exempt under section 36 of the FOIA, which is a qualified exemption, subject to a public interest test.

We acknowledge the strong public interest in how Ministers are briefed: an informed and involved public helps to promote good decision-making by public bodies, but those bodies also need a space for free and frank advice, to enable the highest possible quality of decision-making. The release of this information would show the public, in part, how Government ministers are advised by the civil service.

However, this information was provided with a reasonable expectation that it would not be released into the public domain; it comprises private briefing and advice to enable NIO ministers to contribute fully to collective decision-making, reach their own decisions, and have fruitful interactions with stakeholders.

In this instance the public interest in continuing to enable the continued provision of free and frank advice (and thereby allowing ministers to come to the best possible decisions and to be able to properly and meaningfully engage with stakeholders, for example) is stronger than the public interest in disclosing the information. This is because the disclosure of the information in question would hamper the process of advising ministers on sensitive topics in the future.

	We have therefore concluded that this category of information should not be disclosed. Some of the information which falls into the scope of your request is also exempt from disclosure under section 40 of FOIA. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In this case, I believe disclosure would contravene data protection principle (a), which provides that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and the Northern Ireland Office is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information. Some of the information you have requested is being withheld because it is exempt under section 41(1) of the freedom of information act. Section 41(1) exempts information, where disclosure would constitute an actionable breach of confidence. Section 41(1) is an absolute exemption for the purposes of the FOIA but, in reaching our decision to withhold this information, the Northern Ireland Office has taken into account that there is a public interest defence to an action for breach of confidence. I am satisfied that disclosure of the information requested would constitute an actionable breach of confidence and that the NIO could not rely on the defence that an overriding interest breaching its duty of confidence. The courts have maintained that there is a very strong general public interest in protecting confidences and this could only be superseded by an overriding public interest in disclosure. I do not consider that there is such an overriding public interest in disclosure of the information withheld. Section 41 guidance – Information provided in confidence
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/049
Month Issued	April 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 2000.</i> <i>Please send me:</i> <i>A copy of the first day briefing paper provided to the Secretary of State (and any associated documents)</i>

Response	The Northern Ireland Office holds information which falls into the scope of your request. The majority of this information is exempt from disclosure by virtue of section 36(b)(i) of the FOIA, which sets out that information is exempt from disclosure if disclosure “would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank provision of advice”. The exceptions to this are three documents below which are already in the public domain and the First Day Brief contents page found at the end of this letter. • The Belfast (‘Good Friday’) Agreement - available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-belfast-agreement • A copy of the Ministerial Code - available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ministerial-code • A copy of the New Decade, New Approach deal - available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/deal-to-see-restored-government-in-northern-ireland-tomorrow The remainder of the information is exempt under section 36 of the FOIA, which is a qualified exemption, subject to a public interest test. We acknowledge the strong public interest in how Ministers are briefed: an informed and involved public helps to promote good decision-making by public bodies, but those bodies also need a space for free and frank advice, to enable the highest possible quality of decision-making. The release of this information would show the public, in part, how Government ministers are advised by the civil service. However, this information was provided with a reasonable expectation that it would not be released into the public domain; it comprises private briefing and advice to enable NIO ministers to contribute fully to collective decision-making, reach their own decisions, and have fruitful interactions with stakeholders. In this instance the public interest in continuing to enable the continued provision of free and frank advice (and thereby allowing ministers to come to the best possible decisions and to be able to properly and meaningfully engage with stakeholders, for example) is stronger than the public interest in disclosing the information. This is because the disclosure of the information in question would hamper the process of advising ministers on sensitive topics in the future. We have therefore concluded that this category of information should not be disclosed.
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	Section 36 guidance – Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs
FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/050
Month Issued	April 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 2000.</i> <i>Please send me:</i> • <i>A copy of the briefing prepared for / provided to the NI SoS, the Prime Minister & officials in No10 / Stormont House – ahead of the PM’s visit to Stormont in Jan 13th 2020.</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office holds information which falls within the scope of your request, this information is exempt from disclosure by virtue of section 36(b)(i) and section 38 of the FOIA, Section 36(b)(i) sets out that information is exempt from disclosure if disclosure “would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank provision of advice. Section 36 of the FOIA is a qualified exemption, subject to a public interest test. We have carried out a public interest test in reaching our decision. The factors taken into account are set out below. <u><i>Public interest considerations favouring releasing the information:</i></u> • We acknowledge the strong public interest in how Government decisions are made: an informed and involved public helps to promote good decision-making by public bodies, but those bodies also need a space for free and frank advice, to enable the highest possible quality of decision-making. • The release of this information would show the public, in part, how Government ministers are advised by the civil service. <u><i>Public interest considerations against confirming or denying that information is held:</i></u> • This information was provided with a reasonable expectation that it would not be released into the public domain • The information comprises private briefing and advice to enable NIO ministers to contribute fully to collective decision-making, reach their own decisions, and have fruitful interactions with stakeholders. In this instance the public interest in continuing to enable the continued provision of free and frank advice (and thereby allowing ministers to come to the best possible decisions and to be able to properly and meaningfully engage with stakeholders, for example) is stronger than the public interest in disclosing the information. This is because the disclosure of the information in question would hamper the process of advising ministers on sensitive topics in the future. We have therefore concluded that this category of information should not be disclosed.

	The remainder of this information is exempt under section 38 of the FOIA which relates to the health and safety of any individual. As section 38 is a qualified exemption, we have carried out a public interest test in reaching our decision. The factors taken into account are set out below. <i><u>Public interest considerations favouring releasing the information:</u></i> • Provide the public with increased transparency around the movement of Ministers during visits to the Stormont Estate; • Revealing information would allow the public to be assured that public funds for visits are used effectively and that the public interest has been maintained and safeguarded; and • Greater transparency makes government departments more accountable and increases public trust and scrutiny. <i><u>Public interest considerations against confirming or denying that information is held:</u></i> • Disclosure of information relating to the movement of Ministers around the Stormont Estate could compromise the safety of future visits. In this case, we have concluded that the public interest favours withholding the information. You can find more information about Sections 36 and 38 by reading the full text of the Act, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/36 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/38
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/054
Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<i>Under the FOI Act, I am seeking the following information:</i> • <i>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.</i>
Response	The issue of seasonal clock change is a devolved matter and is the responsibility the Northern Ireland Executive. Details of a recent Parliamentary Question in respect of this matter can be found at the following link: https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-02-13/HL1659/ I can confirm that the department holds information that you have asked for, but it is exempt from disclosure.

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.

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 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.

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.

	<u>Public interest considerations favouring withholding the information</u> • 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 around 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.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/060
Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<u>Freedom of Information Request</u> <u>New Legal Framework for Abortion Services in Northern Ireland</u> 1. Please detail all stakeholders; (a) Professional Bodies, (b) NGO's, (c) Political Parties, (d) other organisations the Secretary of State & Minister of State has consulted and held meetings since the 21 October 2019, the date the Government was required to fulfil its obligations under the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019. 2. Please detail all meetings and consultations the Secretary of State and Minister of State has held with NI Executive Ministers & MLA's to ascertain the views of the Assembly on the New Legal Framework for Abortion Services, since the restoration of the NI Executive on 11 January 2020.
Response	The Northern Ireland Office holds information which falls into the scope of your request. Some of this information is exempt from disclosure under section 40 of FOIA. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In this case, I believe disclosure would contravene data protection principle (a), which provides that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and the Northern Ireland Office is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information. On 13 February 2020 Brandon Lewis MP replaced Julian Smith MP as the Northern Ireland Secretary. Robin Walker MP replaced Nick Hurd MP as Minister for State on 13 February 2019. We can confirm that the following meetings have occurred since 21 October 2019 in relation to your request for information at (1) above: Current and previous Northern Ireland Secretary of State

- 1 November 2019 - ,
- 4 February 2020 - Lords Morrow and McCrea
- 2 March - John Hayes MP
- 6 March 2020 – ,

Minister of State

- 4 February 2020 - Jim Shannon MP, Carla Lockhart MP, Fiona Bruce MP and Lisa Cameron MP [this meeting happened when Robin Walker MP was Parliamentary Under Secretary for State]
- 20 February - ,
- 20 February - Royal Medical Colleges
- 24 February 2020 - NIHRC and ECNI
- 2 March 2020 - Free Presbyterian Church
- 25 February 2020 - Alliance for Choice, Here NI and Women's Resource and Development Agency
- 24 February 2020 - Amnesty Northern Ireland
- 9 March 2020 - Stella Creasy MP
- 9 March 2020 - John Hayes MP, Danny Kruger MP and Miriam Cates MP
- 27 February 2020 - Diana Johnson MP
- 17 March 2020 - Karin Smyth MP (and on behalf of Tony Lloyd MP too)
- 9 March 2020 - Maria Miller MP
- 12 March 2020 - Stephen Farry MP
- 27 February 2020 - Baroness Barker
- 20 March 2020 - Baroness O'Loan, Carla Lockhart MP, Lord Morrow and Lord McCrea

In relation to your request for information under (2) above, I can confirm that the following meetings have occurred with NI Executive Ministers and MLAs:

Minister Walker

- 19 February 2020 - Robin Swann, Health Minister NI
- 25 February 2020 - Naomi Long, Justice Minister NI
- 23 March 2020 - Robin Swann, Health Minister NI

Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<i>I am writing to you in regards to a freedom of information request. There was a dossier presented to the British Government around the year 2001 by the then MLA for East Antrim Mr Danny O'Connor SDLP. The dossier compiled a list of hundreds of sectarian incidents on the Catholic community in Larne between 1998 - 2000. Can you look and see if this dossier is still held in records, if so I would like a copy of this dossier.</i>
Response	We have conducted a search of our records and can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within the scope of your request.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/068
Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I seek the following information about the Northern Ireland Office Backup Policy for the Northern Ireland Office's Office 365 deployment.</i> <i>1. Can you please confirm if you are using the Microsoft Office 365 solution in your IT environment?</i> <i>2. If so, how you currently back up your Office 365 data? If it is backed up please confirm which software or service solution you currently have in place.</i> <i>3. If a system or service is in place to backup Northern Ireland Office's Office 365 environment can you confirm the retention period the data is stored for?</i> <i>4. Who in Northern Ireland Office is responsible for the protection of your critical data?</i>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). 1. The Northern Ireland Office does not use the Microsoft Office 365 solution 2. N/A 3. N/A 4. 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 this instance is the first data protection principle, which states that personal data shall be processed 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. 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.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/069
Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<i>This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act. Please note there are several parts to this request.</i> <i>I understand that the NIO has a central FOI team who manage and co-ordinate all FOI requests. I also understand that the FOI team also provides advice and assistance to staff on a case by case basis as required.</i> <i>In light of this, could you please provide the following information:</i> <i>1. Please indicate the number of current staff that make up the central FOI team.</i> <i>2. Could you please indicate whether this number of staff has increased or decreased over the past three financial years?</i> <i>3. Please indicate how much budget is allocated to the central FOI team.</i> <i>4. Could you please indicate whether this amount has increased or decreased over the past three financial years?</i>
Response	In respect of questions 1 & 2, in the last three year period the FOI shared service has increased from 2 members of staff to 3 members of staff. In respect of questions 3 & 4, the FOI shared service does not have a specific allocation as costs are managed centrally within the NIO's Business Delivery Group expenditure.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/071
Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<i>FOI Request in relation to letters known as "Comfort Letters" given to terrorist suspects giving immunity/amnesty for alleged offenses including persons some of whom were wanted and "on the run".</i> <i>1. How many of the letters sent out between 31st October 2009 and 31stOctober 2012 were signed by a civil servant</i> <i>2. What rank is/are the civil servant(s) and what are their names.</i> <i>3. Who, if anyone, instructed the civil servant(s) to sign the letters.</i> <i>4. Would the letters normally be signed by the Secretary of State and if so was the SoS officially made aware that a civil servant(s) was issuing these letters?</i>

Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and we have responded on the basis of the information that we have available. 1) How many of the letters sent out between 31st October 2009 and 31st October 2012 were signed by a civil servant? In total 19 letters were issued during the stipulated period, all of which were signed by a Senior Civil Servant. 2) What rank is/are the civil servant(s) and what are their names? Section 21 of the FOIA stipulates that information which is reasonably accessible otherwise is exempt from disclosure. The names of all but one of those who signed the letters - who were all senior civil servants - is contained within 'The Report of the Hallett Review - An Independent Review Into The On Runs Administrative Scheme' which was produced by the Right Honourable Dame Heather Hallett DBE and is publically available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-hallett-review Disclosure of the name of the remaining individual is exempt under section 38(1) (b) of the Freedom of Information Act which exempts information if its disclosure would, or would be likely to endanger the safety of any individual. <u>Public Interest Test</u> The exemption in section 38 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 also recognise a public interest in greater public understanding of the role of public servants in historic events. I have weighed these public interests against a strong public interest in protecting the safety of individual public servants and members of the services, who might be put at risk if their duties became public knowledge. The release of such information might deter others from accepting such responsibilities in the future and this would impair the ability of Her Majesty's Government to discharge its responsibilities for public safety and the defence of the United Kingdom. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information. 3) Who, if anyone, instructed the civil servant(s) to sign the letters? Whilst the Secretary of State had overall authority over the implementation of the On The Runs scheme, the actual signing of the letters formed part of the process associated with the administration of the arrangement. 4) Would the letters normally be signed by the Secretary of State and if so was the SoS officially made aware that a civil servant(s) was issuing these letters?
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	No, the letters would not normally have been signed by the Secretary of State. Each SoS was aware that the scheme was in operation while they were in post.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/072
Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<i>Please can you give a date for the final removal of the drop arm vehicle barriers at the following locations:</i> • <i>Castle Street/Queen St</i> • <i>Queen St/College St</i> • <i>High St</i> • <i>Donegall Place/Donegall Square</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. You may want to direct your request to the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland or The National Archives who may hold the information you have requested.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/073
Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<i>I would like to know what policies are in place within your organisation to enable remote working during the Covid-19 lockdown since the start of the calendar year please.</i> <i>Breakdown of the number of new devices purchased by your organisation:</i> <i>Laptops</i> <i>Tablet computers</i> <i>Mobile Phones</i> <i>Detail on remote working software/licences purchased</i> <i>Number of Zoom accounts created</i> <i>Number of new office 365 account purchased</i>
Response	In respect of question 1, we can advise the following purchases made. 0 0 50 For question 2, we can advise the following purchases made.

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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/075
Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<i>I want to submit a request for some information from the organisation, in relation to their contract's register.</i> <i>The contract register should display all the organisations existing/live contracts I would like the register to display the following columns/headings:</i> <i>1. Contract Reference</i> <i>2. Contract Title</i> <i>3. Procurement Category</i> <i>4. Supplier Name</i> <i>5. Spend (Total or Annual)</i> <i>6. Contract Duration</i> <i>7. Contract Extensions</i> <i>8. Contract Starting Date</i> <i>9. Expiration Date</i> <i>10. Contract Description [Please provide me with as much detail as possible.]</i> <i>11. Contact Owner (Full contact details if possible.)</i> <i>12. CPV codes/ProClass</i> <u><i>Contract Data/API Contact Details</i></u> <i>1. Can you also provide me with contact details of the person responsible for the actual contract's register or someone responsible for API? [Name, Job Title, Telephone, Email Address] At the very least provide me with their actual job title.</i> <i>(Meaning of API "a set of functions and procedures that allow the creation of applications which access the features or data of an operating system, application, or other service.")</i>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

	The NIO are named participants in multi departmental Collaborative frameworks managed and procured via Central Procurement Delivery (collaboration.cpd@finance-ni.gov.uk) and Crown Commercial Services (info@crowncommercial.gov.uk) who both hold the requested information. I can confirm that we hold LIMITED information on directly procured contracts 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 12 is engaged. The law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for. To comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such material, officials would be required to open and read a large amount of records individually across all our information repositories. 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 detail and extent of your headings, requesting only specific information relevant to your interest. Please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/076
Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<i>This is a Freedom of Information request for the following questions:</i> <i>1. What IT helpdesk tool(s) is/are in use at the NI Office (e.g. SpiceWorks, Freshdesk, etc) if not, how is your IT managed?</i> <i>2. What is the price per annum of said helpdesk tool(s)?</i> <i>3. What are the requirements of the IT team; or, what the tool(s) is/are used for?</i> <i>4. What is the annual budget available for helpdesk tool(s)?</i> <i>5. What are the redeeming qualities of the tool(s) (and negative qualities)?</i> <i>6. What is the start date, length and review date of the contract with the helpdesk tool(s)?</i> <i>7. How many operators currently use the ITSM tool?</i> <i>8. How many end users currently use the ITSM tool?</i>
Response	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.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/077
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Month Issued	April 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 government vehicles (owned or leased) that are a) petrol, b) diesel, c) electric, d) hybrid.</i>
Response	In respect of your questions The Northern Ireland Office can confirm the following: The Northern Ireland Office leases one diesel car.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/079
Month Issued	April 2020
Request	<i>I would like to request the following information:</i> <i>What has been the cost to your department on public inquiries from 2015/16 until present?</i> <i>Please include:</i> <i>The most recent available cost of any ongoing inquiries</i> <i>If an inquiry concluded between 2015/16 and the present, but began before April 2015, please include the total cost of that inquiry</i> <i>If an inquiry concluded between 2015/16 and the present, but began after April 2015, please include the total cost of that inquiry</i> <i>Please provide a breakdown of spending on each inquiry including, but not limited to, travel, IT, office accommodation, publications, legal and communications. If a breakdown is not possible, please provide the total cost.</i> <i>Public inquiries include costs for both statutory inquiries (per the Inquiries Act 2005) and any non-statutory inquiries (ad-hoc inquiries, Committee of Privy Counsellors and Royal Commissions).</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office has conducted a search of our records and does not hold any information within the scope of your request.