

MARCH 2020 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSES

Year	Month	FOI Reference	Topic
2020	Mar	FOI/20/030	Brexit preparations: civil disobedience and economic impact assessments
2020	Mar	FOI/20/032	Northern Ireland border polls and Irish reunification
2020	Mar	FOI/20/033	Bridge project between Northern Ireland and Scotland: correspondence
2020	Mar	FOI/20/034	IT system vulnerabilities
2020	Mar	FOI/20/035	Data security incidents
2020	Mar	FOI/20/039	Staff travel: domestic flights
2020	Mar	FOI/20/040	Handling of FOI requests: training and guidance
2020	Mar	FOI/20/041	Inside IR35 workers and contractors
2020	Mar	FOI/20/042	Spending on technology and IT advice
2020	Mar	FOI/20/044	Criminal Justice Act applications
2020	Mar	FOI/20/045	Outsourced facilities management contracts
2020	Mar	FOI/20/046	Destruction of archival records on the Kincora Boys' Home
2020	Mar	FOI/20/048	Engagement with British American Tobacco and The Nudge Factory
2020	Mar	FOI/20/051	Bullying, unfair dismissal and sexual discrimination complaints
2020	Mar	FOI/20/052	Bullying, sexual harassment, racism and religious discrimination
2020	Mar	FOI/20/053	Bridge project between Northern Ireland and Scotland
2020	Mar	FOI/20/055	2022 Festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
2020	Mar	FOI/20/056	Archival file request: intelligence gathering
2020	Mar	FOI/20/057	Archival file request: disbandment of the Civilian Search Unit
2020	Mar	FOI/20/058	Bullying and harassment complaints
2020	Mar	FOI/20/059	Secretary of State: office holders and major events during their tenure
2020	Mar	FOI/20/062	Council housing
2020	Mar	FOI/20/063	Social housing
2020	Mar	FOI/20/064	Employment tribunals
2020	Mar	FOI/20/065	Correspondence on infected blood

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/030
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	1. <i>Can you please supply, the details of any plans made for responding to Brexit - Civil Disobedience</i> 2. <i>Can you please supply, any reports/memos of economic impact assessments made in relation to the effect of Brexit for NI</i>
Response	This information is exempt under Section 21(1) 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: Please see the following link in respect of question 1: http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/home-affairs-committee/home-office-preparations-for-brexit/oral/105005.pdf Please see the following links in respect of question 2: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/841245/EU_Withdrawal_Agreement_Bill_Impact_Assessment.pdf https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/eu-exit-analysis

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/032
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>I am sending this request under the Freedom of Information Act to ask for the following information:</i> • <i>Could you please disclose all impact assessments, analyses, and briefing documents produced by the Northern Ireland Office for ministers and the Secretary of State regarding the possibility of a Northern Ireland border poll, and also on the possibility of a vote in favour of Irish reunification?</i> <i>I would like all relevant documents, as outlined above, which have been produced since 1st January 2019.</i>
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 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 disclosable information taken from briefing documents is set out in the annex to this letter.

	As you know, section 36 of the FOIA is a qualified exemption, subject to a public interest test. 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. 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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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/033
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, I request all correspondence received on the issue of a bridge between Scotland and Northern Ireland since 8 June 2017.</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office has looked through archives for the periods you cited. After a search of our records, we have identified material within the scope of your request. This is attached, please note that certain personal data has been redacted in line with section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Some of the information requested is exempt under the following sections of the FOIA 2000: Section 21 (Information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means), Section 28 (Relations within the UK) Section 35 (Formulation of government policy) and Section 42 (Legal professional privilege). Information you have requested is exempt under section 21(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 21 exempts information if this information is reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. Section 21 is an absolute exemption

and the Northern Ireland Office is not required to consider whether the public interest favours disclosure of this information. This information can be found at the following links:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-06-19/155238/>

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-02-07/127428/>

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-02-05/126445/>

Information you have requested is exempt under section 28 of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 28 is a qualified exemption and the Northern Ireland Office has considered whether the public interest in disclosing this information.

Public interest considerations in favour of disclosure:

The Northern Ireland Office recognises that 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.

Public interest considerations against disclosure:

On the other hand, there is a very strong public interest in maintaining good relations between the government of the United Kingdom and the other administrations in the United Kingdom. I have determined that in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exclusion outweighs the public interest in disclosing this information.

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) and (b) of the FOIA.

Section 35(1)(a) and (b) 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. 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. <u><i>Public interest considerations against disclosure:</i></u> 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. There needs to be a free space in which it is possible to use imagination, without the fear that policy proposals will be compromised by premature disclosure. After careful consideration we have concluded that Section 35(1)(a) and (b) is engaged and that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information. Information you have requested is being withheld because it is exempt under section 42 of the Freedom of Information Act. <u><i>Public interest considerations in favour of disclosure:</i></u> There is a general public interest in disclosure of information and we recognise that openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government. There is also a definite public interest in understanding the legal justification for decisions taken by government. <u><i>Public interest considerations against disclosure:</i></u> Against this there is a strong public interest in protecting the confidentiality of communications between lawyers and their clients. This confidentiality promotes respect for the rule of law by encouraging clients to seek legal advice and allowing for full and frank exchanges between clients and their lawyers. It is particularly important for the Government to seek legal advice in relation to sensitive and difficult decisions, and for any advice given to be fully informed and fully reasoned. Without confidentiality, clients might fear that anything they say to their lawyers, however sensitive or potentially damaging, could be revealed later. They might be deterred from seeking legal advice at all, or from disclosing all relevant material to their lawyers. Or the advice given may not be as full and frank as it ought to be. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, we have determined that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information. Section 35 guidance – Formulation of Government policy
FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/034
Month Issued	March 2020

Request	Please see the questions below, and thank you for your efforts: 1. How many ERP applications is your department currently running? 2. How many Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS) systems is your department currently running? a. Was your office made aware of the recent business-critical PAYDAY vulnerability that affected Oracle EBS systems? (link for reference: https://www.itpro.co.uk/vulnerability/34849/thousands-of-businesses-vulnerable-to-severe-oracle-ebs-flaws) 3. How many Systems, Applications, and Products (SAP) systems are you running? a. Was your office made aware of the recent 10KBlaze vulnerability affecting SAP systems? (link for reference: https://www.onapsis.com/resources/10kblaze?utm_campaign=project_thunder_2019&utm_medium=website&utm_source=home_page)
Response	The Northern Ireland Office does not run ERP, EBS or SAP solutions. The primary HR and payroll software used by the Northern Ireland Office is provided by the Ministry of Justice. The information requested is, therefore not held by this department. This information may be available from the Ministry of justice who can be contacted at data.access@justice.gov.uk. The Northern Ireland Office receives their managed corporate finance solution 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/20/035
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	Under the Freedom of Information Act, I request: 1. The total number of data security incidents which have occurred in your department in 2019 and details of these incidents; 2. The number of data security incidents in 2019 which involved the release of personal email addresses; 3. The number of data security incidents in 2019 which have breached data protection laws; 4. Any steps which have been taken to remedy any of the incidents in 1-3; 5. Any disciplinary action which has taken place as a result of the incidents in 1-3.
Response	During 2018-19, there was one minor incident that did not require reporting to the Information Commissioner; this incident did not involve the release of a personal email address and did not breach data protection laws, therefore disciplinary action

	was not appropriate. Following this incident, processes were reviewed. I can also inform you that Northern Ireland Office staff are routinely reminded of their responsibilities under data protection legislation. I can also inform you that information on breaches of information security are published in the Northern Ireland Office's Annual Report & Accounts. The latest version can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northern-ireland-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2018-19
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/039
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Under the FOI Act (2000) I request the following information.</i> <i>In total, how many domestic flights have been taken by representatives of your department in the following years:</i> <i>a) 2015</i> <i>b) 2016</i> <i>c) 2017</i> <i>d) 2018</i> <i>e) 2019</i> <i>By 'representatives of your department' I mean ministers, staff, special representatives, or anyone otherwise carrying out duties for your department. My definition of domestic flight is a flight between any points of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.</i> <i>For each given year, please count all flights paid for by the department, along with all flights which were taken to conduct departmental duties if paid for by another means. Please count each passenger as a flight. For instance, two members of staff taking the same plane journey would count as two flights.</i>
Response	The information below provides the number of domestic flights taken by representatives of the Department in each of the calendar years requested. However, some information regarding flights taken from January 2015 to March 2017 is not held as this was under a previous contractual arrangement. Also on occasion, multiagency travel has been arranged centrally by another Department/Agency, however, information regarding this travel is not held by this Department.

	a. 2015 – 822 domestic flights b. 2016 – 902 domestic flights c. 2017 – 1,504 domestic flights d. 2018 – 2,062 domestic flights e. 2019 – 2,227 domestic flights
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/040
Month Issued	February 2020
Request	<i>This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act.</i> <i>My request relates to how the Department processes FOI requests, as well as the training it receives when handling FOI requests.</i> <i>I would like to request the following information:</i> <i>1. Please provide all guidelines and related documents that are used when processing FOI requests. I expect this to include all guidelines and related documents that are used when refusing requests, as well as documents relating to updates on FOI case law.</i> <i>2. Please provide all FOI training materials that the Department holds. I expect this to include guidelines, briefings, and such documents, including presentation slides.</i> <i>3. Please indicate how frequently the Department trains its staff in relation to FOI. Please indicate who provides the FOI training, and please indicate when they held training sessions (in the past three calendar years). Please also provide copies of their training materials.</i> <i>4. If the FOI training is outsourced, please indicate who provides the FOI training, and please indicate when they held training sessions (in the past three calendar years). Please also provide copies of their training materials.</i>
Response	Q1&2. Please see attached training material in respect of questions 1 and 2. Q3. The NIO has a central FOI team who manage and co-ordinate all FOI requests. The FOI manager meets with members of staff that are new to the department to discuss their responsibilities under the FOIA and the processes in place to deal with FOI requests within the statutory timescale. The attached FOI guidance is readily available on the NIO intranet for staff to refer to. The FOI team also provide advice and assistance to staff on a case by case basis as required. Q4. FOI training is not outsourced

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/041
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Under FOI, please could you tell me:</i> <i>How many open positions you have for "inside IR35" workers/contractors? (ie. how many positions are you advertising but so far have not found suitable people to fill)</i> <i>How many filled "inside IR35" positions do you have? (ie. how many people are working for you with "inside IR35" conditions)</i> <i>You're welcome to use any time in the recent past for these calculations, although the more recent the better, please (and please tell me what time you used). The length of tenure, either expected or worked is not important - just the number of positions is enough for me.</i>
Response	The information given is the current position on 2 March 2020. In response to your first question, the number of current recruitment campaigns in the NIO on 2 March 2020 is four, which have not concluded and are still ongoing. In response to your second question, the current number of filled "inside IR35" positions in the NIO is 206, on 2 March 2020.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/042
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to know:</i> <i>Your department and associated agencies' spend on technology or advice relating to the use of algorithms, machine learning or artificial intelligence for any of its functions</i> <i>Please could you break this down by year, for the last five years with a year end of December 31? If you are unable to provide five years of data, please provide three years of data, otherwise please provide data for the last two years.</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office has not spent any money on algorithms, machine learning or artificial intelligence for any of its functions.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/044
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Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Please accept this as formal request under the freedom of information act for the following information.</i> <i>Since the Supreme Court decision in McCartney and Others in May 2011 to present day ;</i> <i>• how many applications under section 133 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 have satisfied each of the Court's categorisations, i.e.;</i> <i>– Category 1?</i> <i>– Category 2?</i> <i>– Category 3?</i> <i>– Category 4?</i> <i>• Where applications have been successful under section 133:</i> <i>– How many payments have been paid out under Category 1?</i> <i>– How many payments have been paid out under Category 2?</i> <i>Since the amendment of section 133 of the Criminal Justice Act by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 section 175 and/or referred to as Section 133(1ZA), to present day,</i> <i>• how many applications have satisfied each of the Court's categorisations, i.e.;</i> <i>– Category 1?</i> <i>– Category 2?</i> <i>– Category 3?</i> <i>– Category 4?</i> <i>• Where applications have been successful under the amended criteria:</i> <i>– How many payments have been paid out under Category 1?</i> <i>– How many payments have been paid out under Category 2?</i>
Response	The Department does not hold information assessing which applications received under s133 Criminal Justice Act fall into the categories identified by the Supreme Court in McCartney.

	Applications for compensation under s133 of the Criminal Justice Act 1998 are administered by the Ministry of Justice for England and Wales with separate schemes operating in Scotland; and in Northern Ireland (the Department of Justice) except for cases involving sensitive national security information which are handled by the Northern Ireland Office. As a consequence the information provided below does not constitute a full account of applications made under that Act and you may wish to consult the organisations referenced for further information. The Northern Ireland Office does however hold information relating to payments it has processed as a result of applications made under s133 of the Criminal Justice Act 1998. I can confirm that 8 individuals have received criminal justice compensation payments under s133 Criminal Justice Act after May 2011. All of these payments were as the result of applications submitted prior to the introduction of s133 (1ZA) of that Act. The Department also holds the following information, correct as of 2013, from the Northern Ireland Department of Justice that payments were made as a result of applications under s133 of the Criminal Justice Act between April 2010 and December 2013. As noted above you may wish to contact the Department of Justice; Ministry of Justice or Scottish Government for further up to date information in respect of any applications they may have received.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/045
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Please can you provide me with the following details for any outsourced Facilities Management requirements within your Ministry?</i> <i>1. Please provide a list of all current outsourced contracts for the provision of Hard, Soft and Total Facilities Management.</i> <i>2. Please provide details of what each contract is for.</i> <i>3. Are these contracts provided under a framework? If so, what is that framework?</i> <i>4. Who is the current incumbent supplier of each contract?</i> <i>5. When does each contract start and finish?</i> <i>6. Is there an option to extend the term, and if so by how long?</i> <i>7. What is the annual expenditure for each contract?</i> <i>8. Who is the key sponsor of each contract and what are their contact details?</i> <i>9. Please provide contact details for key personnel in your Procurement and Facilities Management Teams.</i>

	<i>Please can you answer the same questions for any other bodies that support you or you fund (i.e. non-ministerial departments, Executive Agencies, Executive/Advisory non-departmental public bodies and Public Corporations as listed below) or if not, provide details of who would be able to provide the information.</i> • Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission • Parades Commission for Northern Ireland • Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland
Response	The Northern Ireland Office occupies two office locations, one in Stormont House, Belfast and another in 1 Horse Guards Road, London. In 1 Horse Guards Road, London these services are included as part of the landlord's service charge. In Stormont House, Belfast the Hard, Soft and Total Facilities Management is provided through collaborative contracts for managed services awarded by the Department of Finance Construction and Procurement Delivery (CPD), which is a Centre of Procurement Excellence. Information on these contracts are published on the CPD website. The NIO does not hold information in respect of other bodies. You should contact each organisation directly at the following email addresses:- Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission - info@nihrc.org Parades Commission for Northern Ireland - info@paradescommissionni.org Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland - contact@boundarycommission.org.uk

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/046
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>I am making an FOI request for details of which files relating to the Kincora Boys Home were destroyed between 1970 and the present day, who authorised their destruction, when they were destroyed and by whom.</i>
Response	Please see the table below which provides details of the files that have been destroyed and when they were destroyed. Some of the information you have requested is being withheld because it is exempt under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. 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 of the Data Protection Act 2018. In this case, I believe disclosure would contravene 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.

Start Date	End Date	File Name	Destruction date
01/01/1982	31/12/1982	KINCORA BOYS HOME	destroyed Oct 2010
01/01/1981	31/12/1983	KINCORA BOYS HOME – PRESS CUTTINGS	destroyed Dec 2010
01/01/1982	31/12/1982	Kincora	destroyed Dec 2010
01/01/1983	31/12/1983	KINCORA BOYS HOME BELFAST AND KINDRED MATTERS : REPORT BY SIR GEORGE TERRY CHIEF CONSTABLE OF SUSSEX TO SIR JOHN HERMON	destroyed Aug 2014
01/01/1983	31/12/1986	Kincora	destroyed Jun 2015
01/01/1982	31/12/1983	Kincora	destroyed Oct 2015

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/048
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>This is a freedom of information request for the following:</i> 1. A list of all meetings held by a) ministers and b) the permanent secretary with the following organisations between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2019. a. British American Tobacco: www.bat.com b. The Nudge Factory: www.nudgefactory.co.uk 2. All written correspondence between a) ministers and b) the permanent secretary with the following organisations between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2019. a. British American Tobacco: www.bat.com b. The Nudge Factory: www.nudgefactory.co.uk
Response	The Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information in relation to your request.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/051
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Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, please can you provide me with responses to the following:</i> <i>1. The annual number of complaints of bullying made by all civil servant staff in the department for each of the last three calendar years and 2020 up until the date this request is answered (please see attached table)?</i> <i>2. The annual number of complaints of bullying specifically made by special advisers (SpAds) in the department for each of the last three calendar years and 2020 up until the date this request is answered (please see attached table)?</i> <i>3. The annual number of complaints of unfair dismissal specifically made by special advisers (SpAds) in the department for each of the last three calendar years and 2020 up until the date this request is answered (please see attached table)?</i> <i>4. The annual number of complaints of sexual discrimination specifically made by special advisers (SpAds) in the department for each of the last three calendar years and 2020 up until the date this request is answered (please see attached table)?</i> <i>Where complaints include more than one of the above types of complaints, please record for all relevant individual categories.</i>
Response	The NIO has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination. If a concern is raised the NIO will take it seriously and act; we are committed to listening to and supporting our employees. In respect of your first question regarding the number of complaints of bullying made by all staff in the department for each of the last three calendar years, the information you require is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FOIA. The information held relates to five or fewer members of staff, therefore there is a risk that individuals subject to this information could be identified. We are not obliged, under section 40(2) of the Act, to provide information that is the personal information of another person if releasing it would contravene any of the Data Protection Principles under 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. With regards to your remaining questions; two, three and four we can confirm we had zero complaints of this nature, by special advisers (SpAds).

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/052
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>May you please supply me with the following information under Freedom of Information laws:</i>

Allegations of workplace bullying, sexism and racism

- *May you please provide the number of allegations of workplace bullying reported within your organisation by present and former staff? Please provide the figures per year within the following calendar years: 2019, 2018 and 2017*
- *May you please provide the number of allegations of workplace sexual harassment reported within your organisation by present and former staff? Please provide the figures per year within the following calendar years: 2019, 2018 and 2017*
- *May you please provide the number of allegations of workplace racism / religious discrimination reported within your organisation by present and former staff? Please provide the figures per year within the following calendar years: 2019, 2018 and 2017*

Disciplinary Action taken

- *How many complaints of workplace sexual harassment resulted in some form of disciplinary action? Please provide the figures per year within the following calendar years: 2019, 2018 and 2017*
- *How many complaints of workplace bullying resulted in some form of disciplinary action? Please provide the figures per year within the following calendar years: 2019, 2018 and 2017*
- *How many complaints of workplace racial / religious discrimination resulted in some form of disciplinary action? Please provide the figures per year within the following calendar years: 2019, 2018 and 2017*

NDAs/ Settlement Agreements signed

- *Please provide the number of settlement agreements / NDAs signed by former or present staff who brought forward allegations of racism, religious discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment*
- *Please provide the figures per year within the following calendar years: 2019, 2018 and 2017 i.e. in 2018, 4 settlement agreements were signed by departing staff. These 4 settlement agreements related to allegations of workplace sexual harassment.*
- *How much was paid in each instance? Please provide the figures per year within the following calendar years: 2019, 2018 and 2017 i.e. in 2018, 4 settlement agreements were signed by departing staff. These 4 settlement agreements related to allegations of workplace sexual harassment. In each case, £10,000 was paid*

If this is not possible, under data protection laws please provide the figures across the three year period.

- *Between 2017 and 2019, 14 settlement agreements were signed by departing staff. These 14 settlement agreements related to allegations of workplace sexual harassment. The total paid over the period was £25,000*

Response	The NIO has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination. If a concern is raised the NIO will take it seriously and act; we are committed to listening to and supporting our employees. In respect of your first question regarding allegations of workplace bullying for the calendar years of 2019, 2018 and 2017 and subsequent related disciplinary action the information you require is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FOIA. The information held relates to five or fewer members of staff, therefore there is a risk that individuals subject to this information could be identified. We are not obliged, under section 40(2) of the Act, to provide information that is the personal information of another person if releasing it would contravene any of the Data Protection Principles under 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. We can confirm we have had no allegations of workplace sexual harassment, racism or religious discrimination and therefore no disciplinary action for the calendar years 2019, 2018 and 2017. There have been no NDAs or signed settlement agreements by former or current staff members in relation to bullying, sexual harassment, racism or religious discrimination for the calendar years 2019, 2018 and 2017.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/053
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Under the FOI Act, I am seeking the following information:</i> <i>All records relating to any proposal for a bridge linking Northern Ireland and Scotland.</i> <i>If it is necessary for any reason to redact any information, please redact the minimum necessary and send me the rest of the material, explaining the legal grounds for each redaction.</i>
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 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 correspondence. 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. 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/20/055
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Under the FOI Act, I am seeking the following information:</i> <i>All records to include correspondence and emails on the planned festival of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 2022.</i> <i>If it is necessary for any reason to redact any information, please redact the minimum necessary and send me the rest of the material, explaining the legal grounds for each redaction.</i>
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 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 across the entire Department would be required to open and read a large amount of records individually across all our information repositories.

	You should not infer from this that the Northern Ireland Office holds a large amount of information relating to the subjects you have asked about, only that we would need to search through a large amount of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request. You can find out more about Section 12(1) by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12. Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to consider a timeframe for the request, indicating a specific team within the Department, or perhaps narrow down the type of records to include in the search. The NIO's Annual Report and Accounts includes some information on how the Department is structured, which you may find useful: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northern-ireland-office-annual-report-and-accounts-2018-19. 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/20/056
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>I am interested in seeing the following document: CJ 4/4845 - Intelligence organisation and resources</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. 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 Please be aware that this response is based on the electronic review notes as the file at the time of the request was part of a refiling exercise and as such access was not practical.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/057
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Please can you tell me on which date the Civilian Search Unit was finally disbanded/closed down in Belfast?</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/20/058
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information.</i> 1. <i>Can you tell me how many bullying and harassment complaints were made by staff in your department in the calendar years:</i> a. 2016 b. 2017

	c. 2018 d. 2019 e. 2020 to date 2. Of the complaints identified in the answers to Q1a-e, can you identify whether they relate to government ministers or civil servants? 3. Can you give me data on the outcomes of the complaints identified in the answers to Q1a-e, e.g. was disciplinary action taken and if so what was it?
Response	The NIO has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination. If a concern is raised the NIO will take it seriously and act; we are committed to listening to and supporting our employees. In respect of your questions regarding allegations of workplace bullying and harassment for the calendar years of 2016 to 2020, and subsequent related details, the information you require is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the 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.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/059
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>I would appreciate your assistance in disclosing, under the Freedom of Information practice, the following;</i> <i>1. Can you please provide me with a list of each Secretary of State and the dates they served in that position?</i> <i>2. In addition to this list, can you please provide a summary of the main political, economic and social developments and issues which happened under the individual tenures of each Secretary of State? I include in this major pieces of legislation and Orders in Council.</i> <i>3. Can you please provide figures by way of a table and graph, showing the number of deaths per year during the conflict era?</i> <i>4. Can you please provide any documents and data you think would be relevant and useful to this project I am undertaking?</i>

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 provide the information that has been asked for in a request (section 12 FOIA). We have made the decision to decline your request, because of the broad scope of it. You should not infer from this that the Northern Ireland Office holds a large amount of information relating to the subjects you have asked about, only that we would need to search through a large amount of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request. 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 reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised request identifying for example: specific developments, legislation and timeframes. Please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit. You can 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/20/062
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Please supply a list (spreadsheet or similar is fine) of all council housing in counties Antrim, Londonderry and Tyrone. Please also supply a list of ex-council housing (i.e. properties bought out under right-to-buy etc).</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within the scope of your request. The Department for Communities (DfC) may be in a position to assist you with your request. The DfC Freedom of Information Team can be contacted at the following email address: foi@communities-ni.gov.uk

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/063
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Please supply a list (spreadsheet or similar is fine) of all social housing in counties Antrim, Londonderry and Tyrone.</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within the scope of your request. The Department for Communities (DfC) may be in a position to assist you with your request. The DfC Freedom of Information Team can be contacted at the following email address: foi@communities-ni.gov.uk

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/064
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Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>May you please supply me with the following information:</i> <u><i>Employment Tribunals</i></u> <i>How many employment tribunal claims were initiated against the Department? Please provide the figures per year for the following calendar years: 2019, 2018 and 2017</i> <i>I.e. in 2018, 12 employment tribunal claims were initiated against the Department</i> <i>Only if possible under data protection laws, please outline the reason the claims were initiated against the Department.</i> <i>I.e. in 2018, 12 employment tribunal claims were initiated against the Department. 2 related to disability discrimination, 2 related to unfair dismissal etc</i> <i>Outcome: How many claims were upheld, with the tribunal ruling in the claimants favour and compensation paid? How many claims were settled out of court and compensation paid</i> <i>Please provide the figures per year for the following calendar years: 2019, 2018, and 2017</i> <i>I.e. in 2018, 12 employment tribunal claims were initiated against the Department. 11 claims were dismissed. 1 claim was settled out of court and related to age discrimination - £20,000 was paid out in this instance.</i> <i>I.e. in 2017, 4 employment tribunal claims were initiated against the Department. 3 claims were dismissed. For 1 claim relating to unfair dismissal, the tribunal ruled in the claimants favour and £40,000 was paid out in this instance.</i>
Response	I can confirm that no employment tribunal claims were initiated against the department in 2018 or 2019. In respect of 2017, the department holds information that you have asked for, but 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, 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.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/065
Month Issued	March 2020
Request	<i>Under FOI, I am requesting the following information:</i> <i>All e-mail correspondence (internal and external) sent by The Permanent Secretary at the Department of Finance, where the search term "infected blood" appears in the e-mail subject or body, during the period 1st November 2019 - 29th Feb 2020.</i> <i>Within the scope of this request, where an e-mail string is identified, please provide the full run of e-mail's associated with th string, including any attachments.</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office has looked through archives for the periods you cited. After a search of our records, we have identified no correspondence within the scope of your request.