

**OCTOBER 2020 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSES**

| Year | Month | FOI Reference | Topic                                                                                         |
|------|-------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/151    | Spending on external legal services                                                           |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/152    | Staff discipline: inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour                                     |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/153    | Intranet articles: UK internal market and devolved administrations                            |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/154    | Spending on Stonewall Equality Limited                                                        |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/155    | The Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020: Clinical Advisor appointment                |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/156    | The Abortion (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020: consultation responses and section 9 duties |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/157    | Staff sick days                                                                               |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/158    | Communications relating to Viktor Fedotov                                                     |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/159    | Archival file request: union strikes and ministerial visits to Larne                          |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/160    | Hosting contracts                                                                             |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/161    | Covid-19 pandemic: staff testing and self-isolation                                           |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/162    | Correspondence on Brexit                                                                      |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/163    | Hillsborough Castle: accommodation invoice                                                    |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/164    | Ministerial speech on the Internal Markets Bill                                               |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/165    | Stonewall diversity champions scheme: submissions and feedback                                |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/166    | Usage of Microsoft software                                                                   |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/167    | Social media monitoring                                                                       |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/168    | Fleetwood strategy contracts                                                                  |
| 2020 | Oct   | FOI/20/169    | Ministerial communication relating to Randox                                                  |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/151                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Request</b>               | <p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, I request the following:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. The total cost in paying for external legal services incurred by your department in financial year 2018-19.</i></li> <li><i>2. The cost incurred by your department from defending judicial review petitions in financial year 2018-19.</i></li> <li><i>3. If your department took part in any judicial review proceedings, the total number of such proceedings in financial year 2018-19.</i></li> <li><i>4. If your department took part in any judicial review proceedings, the total number of such proceedings in which a settlement was reached in financial year 2018-19.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Note:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• By external legal services, I mean services undertaken by non-Government lawyers e.g. solicitors working for private law firms, barristers/advocates providing advice or taking part in court action. I specifically mean to exclude UK Government-employed or UK Government-seconded solicitors or barristers/advocates undertaking work.</i></li> <li><i>• If any private law firms (etc) are employed/tendered on retainer I would appreciate the inclusion of this cost in (1). If for example, any legal services are tendered over two financial years (e.g. 2019/20, 2020/20), this cost should be calculated for just 2018-19.</i></li> </ul> |
| <b>Response</b>              | <p>Freedom of information law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for in a request (section 12 FOIA).</p> <p>We have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as to comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such material, officials would be required to open and read a large amount of different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the broad scope of your request we consider this would cost over £600.</p> <p>Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request by providing a shorter timeframe/date range or more specific types of correspondence.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|  | <p>You should not infer from this that the Northern Ireland Office holds a large amount of information relating to the subjects you have asked about, only that we would need to search through a large number of records in order to find out whether we hold any information relevant to your request.</p> <p>You can find out more about Section 12(1) by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, attached at the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12</a>.</p> <p>Please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit.</p> |
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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/152                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Request</b>               | <p><i>Please provide information to the following under the Freedom of Information Act:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Since the beginning of lockdown, so March 23 this year, how many of your Government Department's staff have been either suspended or dismissed due to allegations of inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour during work calls and meetings online while using digital meeting tools/programmes such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams?</i></li> <li><i>2. Please provide the total number of allegations received, and how many of those resulted in disciplinary action being taken. Please also provide a breakdown of these numbers for each month (including the number so far for September) since March 23.</i></li> <li><i>3. Please provide basic details for what the allegation was in each instance an allegation was received (so what was the inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour), and whether or not the allegations were found proven or not proven. Please also provide a description of the disciplinary action taken in each instance where it was taken.</i></li> </ol> |
| <b>Response</b>              | In respect of questions 1, 2 and 3, no individuals within the Northern Ireland Office have been subject to any misconduct proceedings arising from the use of digital platforms for communication purposes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/153                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Request</b>               | <p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, I request:</i></p> <p><i>All articles on your departmental intranet system from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020 to present regarding the UK Internal Market, The Scottish Parliament, The Welsh Assembly or The Northern Irish Assembly.</i></p> |

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|                 | <i>In addition, I also request all comments from staff in the comments section relating to said articles. I understand names will be redacted to protect the anonymity of staff members.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Response</b> | <p>The information you have requested is exempt under Section 35 of the Freedom of Information Act. This information consists of summaries of internal staff meetings which relate to the formulation and development of policy of the UK Government.</p> <p>This exemption is subject to a test of the balance of public interest. This means that, if information falls within the terms of the exemption, it is necessary to consider whether the public interest in all the circumstances of the particular case requires the information to be released or withheld. The information may only be withheld if the public interest in withholding outweighs the public interest in disclosure. In deciding whether to disclose the information which is exempt under Section 35, we have considered the following public interest reasons in favour of disclosing the information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a public interest in understanding the process by which the UK Government formulate policy on UK Internal Market.</li> <li>• Greater transparency and openness can improve accountability and public trust.</li> <li>• A greater understanding of the basis for Government decision making enables the public to decide for itself whether appropriate factors and options have been considered during the formulation of policy.</li> </ul> <p>We balanced these strong arguments in favour of disclosure against the need to ensure close and effective working relationships within and between UK Government departments. In developing policy, Ministers and officials need to be able to have candid and open discussions with their officials about the various options and their implications. We believe that providing details of our current thinking on our internal response to UKIM still has some impact on planning/approach to transition policy, which we believe would risk the ability of UK Government officials to work with each other in an open and collaborative way now and in the future. If discussions were routinely made public there is a risk that Ministers and officials may feel inhibited from being frank and candid with one another. As a result, the quality of options and debate underlying collective decision making would decline, leading to worse informed and poorer decision making.</p> <p>For these reasons, we have concluded that in this case the harm that would result from disclosure of the exempt information outweighs the public interest arguments in favour of disclosure.</p> |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/154                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Request</b>               | <i>How much money has the Northern Ireland Office paid to the charity Stonewall (Stonewall Equality Limited) in the years 2018, 2019 and 2020? Please provide a breakdown of the expenditure.</i> |

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| <b>Response</b> | <p>Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and I can confirm that there was one payment of £3,000.00 made to Stonewall Equality Limited in 2020.</p> <p>The payment is for NIO's participation in the Diversity Champions programme run by Stonewall. Participation in the scheme gives the NIO access to training, resources and advice on good practice on inclusivity. The programme also gives us access to the annual Workplace Equality Index run by Stonewall.</p> |
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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/155                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Request</b>               | <p><i>NIO - Abortion Regulations</i></p> <p><i>Dr Imogen Stephens, Clinical Advisor to the NIO</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Was the position of Clinical Advisor to the Northern Ireland Office externally advertised? If so, can you clarify where it was advertised and provide a copy of the job description and application form.</i></li> <li><i>2. Please provide a copy of the terms and conditions detailing the arrangements surrounding Dr Stephens' appointment.</i></li> <li><i>3. What was the basis of Dr Stephens' role and how much involvement did she have on drafting The Abortion Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020?</i></li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Response</b>              | <p>We have conducted a search of our records and can confirm that the NIO does not hold any information within the scope of your request.</p> <p><b>Matters responded to as official correspondence</b></p> <p>While we do not hold the information you have requested, we can confirm that all of the work undertaken on the development of the Regulations, including engagement with a wide range of stakeholders in Northern Ireland, was taken forward largely by employees of the Northern Ireland Office, with support from the policy and clinical expertise provided from across the relevant Government departments, including the Department of Health and Social Care. All people involved in delivering the Regulations were employees of the Civil Service, and are bound by the principles of integrity, honesty, objectivity, and impartiality in all of the work that they do and the advice they provide to ministers and Government.</p> |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/156                             |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                           |
| <b>Request</b>               | <i>NIO - Abortion Regulations 2020</i> |

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|                 | <p><u>Consultation - A new legal framework for abortion services in Northern Ireland</u></p> <p>1. To request a copy of consultation responses from organisations, including responses from the medical sector.</p> <p><u>UK Government Section 9 duties</u></p> <p>2. To request a copy of all communication, correspondence, notes etc from NIO Ministers and officials to NI Executive Ministers, NI Departments and officials, and other bodies and individuals regarding the UK Government's legal duty to implement recommendations in paragraphs 85 and 86 of the CEDAW report in accordance with section 9 of the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Response</b> | <p>Freedom of information law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for in a request (section 12 FOIA).</p> <p>In relation to your request, we have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as to comply with the request and to enable us to identify whether we hold any such information, Officials would be required to open and read a range of documents held by several colleagues, as well as the department's ministers and their Private Offices, and this would involve a large amount of different records individually stored in a number of locations, and given the scope of your request, even to just collate a list of the documents we may hold within scope of this request, we consider this would cost over £600.</p> <p>Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a further refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your FOI request and submit a revised and more targeted request.</p> <p>Please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit.</p> <p>You can find out more about Section 12 of the FOIA by reading the full text of the Act, available at <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12</a>.</p> |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/157                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Request</b>               | <p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 could you please provide the following information:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The number of sick days / sick leave that occurred across the whole of NIO in April 2019 and April 2020</i></li> <li><i>The number of sick days / sick leave that occurred across the whole of NIO in May 2019 and May 2020</i></li> <li><i>The number of sick days / sick leave that occurred across the whole of NIO in June 2019 and June 2020</i></li> </ul> |

|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The number of sick days / sick leave that occurred across the whole of NIO in July 2019 July 2020</li><li>• The number of sick days / sick leave that occurred across the whole of NIO in August 2019 and August 2020</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |              |                             |              |                             |       |    |       |    |     |     |     |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |        |    |        |    |
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| Response   | <p>The table below sets out the information you have requested.</p> <table><tr><th>Month 2019</th><th>Number of Sick Absence Days</th><th>Month - 2020</th><th>Number of Sick Absence Days</th></tr><tr><td>April</td><td>95</td><td>April</td><td>37</td></tr><tr><td>May</td><td>108</td><td>May</td><td>27</td></tr><tr><td>June</td><td>73</td><td>June</td><td>41</td></tr><tr><td>July</td><td>86</td><td>July</td><td>36</td></tr><tr><td>August</td><td>71</td><td>August</td><td>11</td></tr></table> <p>For context, in 2019 there were a number of long term absences which is reflected in the exceptional figures recorded.</p> | Month 2019   | Number of Sick Absence Days | Month - 2020 | Number of Sick Absence Days | April | 95 | April | 37 | May | 108 | May | 27 | June | 73 | June | 41 | July | 86 | July | 36 | August | 71 | August | 11 |
| Month 2019 | Number of Sick Absence Days                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Month - 2020 | Number of Sick Absence Days |              |                             |       |    |       |    |     |     |     |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |        |    |        |    |
| April      | 95                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | April        | 37                          |              |                             |       |    |       |    |     |     |     |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |        |    |        |    |
| May        | 108                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | May          | 27                          |              |                             |       |    |       |    |     |     |     |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |        |    |        |    |
| June       | 73                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | June         | 41                          |              |                             |       |    |       |    |     |     |     |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |        |    |        |    |
| July       | 86                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | July         | 36                          |              |                             |       |    |       |    |     |     |     |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |        |    |        |    |
| August     | 71                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | August       | 11                          |              |                             |       |    |       |    |     |     |     |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |      |    |        |    |        |    |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/158                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Request</b>               | <p><i>I am sending this request under the Freedom of Information Act.</i></p> <p><i>Please provide a copy of all emails and work instant messages chats (i.e. Slack or equivalent) including the keyword “Viktor Fedotov” (or spelled as Victor), or “Fedotov”, sent or received by.</i></p> <p><i>a. Brandon Lewis' Office (him and his secretarial team)</i><br/> <i>b. The permanent secretary's Office</i><br/> <i>c. The NIO head of press</i></p> <p><i>From 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to date.</i></p> |
| <b>Response</b>              | We have conducted a thorough search of our records and can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within scope of your request.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/159                                                                               |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                             |
| <b>Request</b>               | <i>Request for a copy of the following information from the Northern Ireland Office:</i> |

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|                 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Historical press cuttings that mention or relate to Larne, County Antrim; any cuttings that relate to the Ulster Workers Council Strike, 1974 and cuttings that relate to the United Unionist Action Council Strike, 1977.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Information, records, memos etc. that relate to Peter Mandelson's visit to Larne, January 2001 to meet victims of sectarian violence in Larne. Any Information related to the visit or outcome of the visit.</i></li> </ol>                |
| <b>Response</b> | <p>With regard to press cuttings, this information is not held by this Department as they are subject to a retention schedule and are not held for any longer than 3 months. With regards to Peter Mandelson's visit, the NIO does not hold information either, also due to the Department's retention schedule.</p> <p>However, you may be able to access this information via The National Archives, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, or any of the newspaper archives that are held by the newspapers themselves.</p> |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/160                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Request</b>               | <p><i>I wish to submit a request to the organisation around their hosting contract(s) with 3rd party providers.</i></p> <p><i>The type of contract I wish to see is below:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Dedicated hosting- Managed environment</i></li> <li>2. <i>Co-Location- hosting allows a business to still own their own server equipment; however, instead of storing it in their own data centre, they instead are able to store it in rented space in a colocation hosting centre.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Cloud Hosting- Cloud hosting services provide hosting for websites on virtual servers, which pull their computing resource from extensive underlying networks of physical web servers.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>Not all of these will be applicable to the organisation.</i></p> <p><i>For the different types of hosting services, can you provide me with the following information:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Type of hosting – Dedicated, Co-Location, Cloud Hosting, Other?</i></li> <li>2. <i>Who is the supplier of the contract? If possible can you also provide me with the name of the vendor, if applicable?</i></li> <li>3. <i>What is the annual contract value for each contract?</i></li> <li>4. <i>What type of cloud environment?</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Private Cloud- a distinct and secure cloud based environment in which only the specified client can operate.</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol> |

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|                 | <p>b. <i>Public Cloud - where cloud services are provided in a virtualized environment, constructed using pooled shared physical resources, and accessible over a public network such as the internet.</i></p> <p>c. <i>Hybrid- integrated cloud service utilising both private and public clouds to perform distinct functions within the same organisation.</i></p> <p>5. <i>What is the original start date of the contract agreement? If there are more than one contract please provide me with the start date for each contract.</i></p> <p>6. <i>What is the actual expiry date of the contract agreement? If there are more than one contract please provide me with the expiry date for each contract.</i></p> <p>7. <i>When will the organisation plan to review this contract? If there are more than one contract please provide me with the review date for each contract.</i></p> <p>8. <i>What is the contract period in years? Please include whether the agreement has any extension periods?</i></p> <p>9. <i>What services are provided under the contract? Please do not put hosting information such as web hosting, file storage, hosted application. The more information the better,</i></p> <p>10. <i>Can you please provide me with the contract officer responsible for this contract? Complete contact details if possible name, title, contact email and number.</i></p> |
| <b>Response</b> | <p>The Northern Ireland Office receives managed ICT services from IT Assist (ITA), which is a service provided by Enterprise Shared Services, a body within the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland. The information requested is, therefore, not held by this Department. This information may be available from the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland who can be contacted at <a href="mailto:foi@finance-ni.gov.uk">foi@finance-ni.gov.uk</a>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/21/161                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Request</b>               | <p><i>I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act. I am looking for information about civil servants who have had to self-isolate or tested positive for Covid-19.</i></p> <p><i>Please could you provide me with the following:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. How many civil servants in the department have had to self-isolate since March 23 2020, when lockdown measures were introduced, for Covid-related reasons such as developing Covid-19 symptoms, testing positive for the virus or coming into close contact with someone who has developed Covid symptoms/tested positive for Covid? Please could you break this figure down month-by-month up to and including September 2020?</i></li> <li><i>2. How many civil servants in the department have reported developing Covid symptoms since March 23, 2020? Please could you break this figure down month-by-month up to and including September 2020?</i></li> </ol> |

|                                         | <p>3. <i>How many civil servants in the department have tested positive for Covid-19 since March 23, 2020? Please could you break this figure down month-by-month up to and including September 2020?</i></p> <p>4. <i>How many civil servants in the department have had to self-isolate after coming into close contact with a colleague in the department's workplace who has either tested positive for Covid-19 or developed symptoms since March 23, 2020? Please could you break this figure down month-by-month up to and including September 2020?</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |       |                                                                                       |                                         |    |            |   |
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| <b>Response</b>                         | <p>In respect of Q1, please see the table below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th><th>No of Civil Servant in the NIO who have had to self-isolate for Covid related reasons</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>From 23 March 2020 (March figures only)</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr> <td>April 2020</td><td>7</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>In response to Q1 for the months May 2020 to September 2020 inclusive, Q2, Q3 and Q4, as the number is fewer than five, 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. <a href="#">Section 40 guidance – Personal information</a></p> | Month | No of Civil Servant in the NIO who have had to self-isolate for Covid related reasons | From 23 March 2020 (March figures only) | 13 | April 2020 | 7 |
| Month                                   | No of Civil Servant in the NIO who have had to self-isolate for Covid related reasons                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                                                                                       |                                         |    |            |   |
| From 23 March 2020 (March figures only) | 13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |       |                                                                                       |                                         |    |            |   |
| April 2020                              | 7                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |       |                                                                                       |                                         |    |            |   |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/162                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Request</b>               | <i>Is it possible to send me copies of correspondence received by the department from members of the public in which Brexit is mentioned during this current financial or calendar year, whichever is more convenient? I do not know if your records are searchable in that fashion.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Response</b>              | The Northern Ireland Office does hold Brexit related correspondence, but not categorised in a way to answer your query within the costs limit. We consider it would cost over £600; which represents the estimated cost of one person spending 31/2 working days calculated at £25 per hour in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it. To enable us to identify and locate whether we hold any such material, many officials would be required to open and read a large amount of different records individually stored in a number of locations for all correspondence related to Brexit, it is on this basis we have made the decision to decline your request (Section 12 FOIA). |

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|  | <p>Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, we might be able to answer a refined request within the cost limit. You may wish to reconsider the scope of your request and submit a revised, more targeted request by providing a particular policy area, or a specific type of correspondence, a shorter time frame/date range or other category of your choosing.</p> <p>Please note that, as in this instance, a further refined request may still not fall within the FOIA cost limit.</p> <p>You can find out more about Section 12 of the FOIA by reading the extract from the Act and some guidance points we consider when applying this exemption, available at <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12</a>.</p> |
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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/163                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Request</b>               | <p><i>The NIO was invoiced £38,400 on March 30 this year for accommodation from Historic Royal Palaces for use of Hillsborough Castle, transparency data published on the department's website shows.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Can you provide me with a copy of the actual invoice received from Historic Royal Palaces please?</i></li> <li><i>2. Is there a breakdown of what the spending was for please?</i></li> <li><i>3. How many nights' accommodation were provided for £38,400?</i></li> <li><i>4. Is it possible to give me a list of people who stayed at the Castle?</i></li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Response</b>              | <p>Hillsborough Castle is managed on a day to day basis by Historic Royal Palaces. As part of the Department's contract with HRP, the NIO pay an annual fee for the use of various accommodation at the Castle, the cost is not determined on the number of nights. The invoice for this is provided. As such, the Department does not hold the other information you are seeking in the format you request. In particular, the list of people who stayed in the Castle is deemed personal information which is exempt under section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><a href="#">Section 40 guidance – Personal information</a></p> |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/164   |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020 |

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| <b>Request</b>  | <p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, I am requesting the release of all records created within the Northern Ireland Office in the drafting of a speech given by Brandon Lewis in the House of Commons on September 8, when he said the Internal Markets Bill would "break international law in a very specific and limited way".</i></p> <p><i>I am requesting all drafts of the speech, any emails between NIO staff who helped to write the script - including Mr Lewis - containing drafts of and comments about the speech, and any emails from Downing Street about the speech before it was delivered.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Response</b> | <p>The information you have requested is exempt under section 35(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which protects the formulation of policy and section 42, which deals with legal professional privilege.</p> <p>Section 35 is a qualified exemption and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours our release of this material. 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 recognise that the decisions Ministers make may have a significant impact on the lives of citizens. These public interests have to be weighed against a strong public interest that policy-making and its implementation are of the highest quality and informed by a full consideration of all the options. Ministers must be able to receive high quality advice on available options and understand their possible implications. The candour of all involved would be affected by their assessment of whether the content of this advice will be disclosed prematurely. If advice were routinely made public there is a risk that Ministers may receive advice that was not candid and of the highest quality. As a result the quality of decision making would decline, leading to worse informed and poorer decision making. It should also be noted that this is still a live issue, the Bill is yet to receive Royal Assent, and the Bill is going through the Parliamentary process which involves lots of public debates and scrutiny. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information on the grounds of section 35 of the Act.</p> <p>There is also a clear public interest in understanding the legal justification for decisions taken by the government.</p> <p>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, I have</p> |

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|  | determined that the balance of the public interest also favours withholding this information on the grounds of section 42 of the Act namely legal professional privilege. |
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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/165                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Request</b>               | <i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, please provide the below information:</i><br><br><i>Submissions to, and feedback received from the Stonewall Diversity Champions Scheme in the years 2018 – 2020.</i> |
| <b>Response</b>              | In the years 2018-2020 no submissions to and feedback from the Stonewall Diversity Champions Scheme have been provided by the Northern Ireland Office.                                                         |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/166                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Request</b>               | <i>Please can you tell me if any officials in the department are using any versions of the following software:</i><br><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Microsoft Excel 97</i></li> <li>• <i>Microsoft Excel 2000</i></li> <li>• <i>Microsoft Excel 2002</i></li> <li>• <i>Microsoft Excel 2003</i></li> </ul><br><i>If possible, please also state the name of the projects where any of the above are being used to input data.</i> |
| <b>Response</b>              | I can advise that none of the software versions mentioned above are used by NIO officials.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/167                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Request</b>               | <i>This is a request under the Freedom of information Act:</i><br><br><i>This is a request for documentation and internal communications relating to social media monitoring and gathering of information by the Northern Ireland Office</i><br><br><i>Social media monitoring is taken to include, but is not limited to, the collection, use, and sharing of social media information.</i> |

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|                 | <p><i>This includes, but is not limited to, following 'hashtags' and keywords on social media platforms related to aspects of the Northern Ireland Office's work and key areas of interest. It can also include intelligence gathering and investigation tactics, and public opinion monitoring.</i></p> <p><i>Please provide any documentation from September 2019 to September 2020 where information about any social media monitoring are provided in documents held by the Northern Ireland Office.</i></p> <p><i>Please provide the same if the Northern Ireland Office has engaged any external bodies or companies as part of the social media monitoring evaluation or reports being prepared.</i></p> <p><i>The above request includes documentation (to include policy documents, internal communications, meeting minutes, presentations, statistical reports, reports prepared for the senior staff or Ministers, etc), that includes information on social media monitoring by, or on behalf of, the Northern Ireland Office.</i></p> |
| <b>Response</b> | <p>The NIO utilises social media on a daily basis to keep up-to-date with breaking news and as an active medium for measuring views from a wide cross section of media and commentators. We do not hold any recorded information in the format requested.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/168                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Month Issued</b>          | October 2020                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Request</b>               | <p><i>I am writing to you with a request under the Freedom of Information act.</i></p> <p><i>My request relates to Fleetwood Strategy, a firm which provides advice on strategy, communications and messaging. Their website can be found here <a href="https://www.fleetwoodstrategy.com/">https://www.fleetwoodstrategy.com/</a></i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Under the act, I would like to ask how many contracts have been awarded by the Northern Ireland Office since January 1 2020 to Fleetwood Strategy Ltd.</i></li> <li><i>Under the act, for each of these contracts, I would like to ask when was each of these contracts awarded, what are the duration of each of these contracts, and what is the value of each of these contracts.</i></li> <li><i>Under the act, for each of these contracts, I would like to ask for a brief description of each contract.</i></li> <li><i>Under the act, I would like to request complete copies of each of these contracts.</i></li> </ol> |
| <b>Response</b>              | <p>The Northern Ireland Office has not awarded any contracts to Fleetwood Strategy since 1 January 2020.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

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| <b>FOI Request Reference</b> | FOI/20/169 |
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| <b>Month Issued</b> | October 2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Request</b>      | <p><i>I would like to ask for the following under FOIA</i></p> <p><i>Please provide me with any available records (emails , letters, notes, etc) of communication between NIO Ministers or Ministerial Private Office staff and Owen Paterson relating to Randox from February or March 2020</i></p> |
| <b>Response</b>     | We have conducted a thorough search of our records and can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within scope of your request.                                                                                                                                      |