

JANUARY 2021 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSES

Year	Month	FOI Reference	Topic
2021	Jan	FOI/20/187	Personal protection provisions
2021	Jan	FOI/20/199	Energy tariffs
2021	Jan	FOI/20/200	IT staff contact details
2021	Jan	FOI/20/201	Correspondence on the Northern Ireland centenary
2021	Jan	FOI/20/202	Artificial intelligence and digital transformation
2021	Jan	FOI/20/203	Spending on promotional material for the Northern Ireland centenary
2021	Jan	FOI/20/204	Archival file request: policy on art murals
2021	Jan	FOI/20/205	Correspondence on promotional material for the Northern Ireland centenary

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/187
Month Issued	January 2021
Request	• <i>How many people in Northern Ireland are currently provided with personal protection staff?</i> • <i>Has this number changed in the last year?</i> • <i>For those who receive personal protection, who provides this and how many personnel for involved for each person, or are different numbers involved for different people on the basis of assessed level of threat, and does this include transport?</i> • <i>How much does providing personal protection cost each year?</i> • <i>What basis is personal protection provided to people?</i> • <i>Of those who receive personal protection, what sector do they work in, i.e. justice system/politics/other?</i>
Response	The provision of 'personal protection' in Northern Ireland is controlled by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). In relation to your question on annual cost, funding for personal protection is controlled by PSNI. The NIO holds information that for the financial year 2018/19 the annual cost of funding personal protection was £9.8m. However, this figure relates to monies paid from Additional Security Funding, and, as PSNI have responsibility for the delivery of personal protection, total costs should be sought from PSNI. In relation to each of the other questions you have asked (concerning the numbers of people who are provided with protection, detail regarding the nature of that protection, the basis upon which it is provided and the sectors in which protected people are employed), our response is set out below. We are not obliged to confirm or deny whether we hold the information you have requested by virtue of both section 23(5) (information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters) and section 24(2) (national security). However, this should not be taken as conclusive evidence that the information you have requested exists or does not exist. The terms of section 23 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 us to reveal whether or not the information is held. Section 24 is a qualified exemption and so we have considered whether it would be in the public interest for us to confirm or deny whether we hold the information. In this case, we have concluded that the public interest favours neither confirming nor denying whether the requested information is held. 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 For completeness, we note that other exemptions may also be applicable to your request – notably, section 31(1), which relates to the prejudice of law enforcement activity and/or section 38.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/199
Month Issued	January 2021
Request	<i>I would like to request the following information under the Environmental Information Regulations regarding energy gas/electricity tariffs at the Northern Ireland Office main office(s) in Whitehall on Horse Guards Rd:</i> • <i>Details of the gas/electricity tariff(s) including price per unit and company</i> • <i>EITHER What proportion of the energy usage comes from green tariffs OR;</i> • <i>Total percentage of energy that comes from renewable sources</i>
Response	At 1 Horse Guards Road, London, energy provision is included as part of the landlord's service charge and the Northern Ireland Office, as a tenant, does not hold this information.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/200
Month Issued	January 2021
Request	<i>Please can you confirm the person responsible for IT/Information Security? Different organisations have different job titles for this responsibility, I've listed below the possible job titles:</i> <i>Manager or Head for IT, Cyber, Information Security, IT Security, Information Governance or CIO (Chief Information Officer) or CISO (Chief Information Security Officer)</i> <i>Please can you provide name, job title, email, direct phone number/mobile number?</i>
Response	In response to your question 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 2018 (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. Section 40 – Personal information.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/201
Month Issued	January 2021
Request	1. From 1st January 2020 to the day this request is processed, I would like all internal correspondence and communications held by the Department that contains the word 'centenary' in the subject. 2. From 1st January 2020 to the day this request is processed, I would like to request all external correspondence and communications held by the Department that contains the word 'centenary' in the subject. 3. I would like to request all correspondence and communications between the Department and NI Centenary Forum.
Response	I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office holds some information that you have asked for. However, we cannot disclose this information because the cost of complying with your request would exceed the limit set by the Freedom of Information Act (section 12). Freedom of information law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 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 locate, identify and retrieve the information would cost over £600. We might be able to answer a revised request if you can reconsider the scope of your FOI request, for example by identifying specific topics and a shorter time- frame. However, please note that a revised 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

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/202
Month Issued	January 2021
Request	<i>I would like to find out more about your organisations adoption of AI and Digital Transformation. Please see below a list of questions that hopefully you can help me with under the FOI ACT.</i> AI & Digital Transformation 1. Do you currently have any AI enabled chatbots engaging with Citizens directly? If not, do you intend to introduce this in the next 12 months?

	<i>If you are looking to introduce AI enabled chatbots in the next 12 months, then please advise us on who is best to contact regarding this. (Name, Job Title and Email address)</i> 2. <i>Do you currently have a live webchat to engage with Citizens live on your website? If not, do you intend to introduce this in the next 12 months?</i> <i>If you are looking to introduce live Webchat in the next 12 months, then please advise us on who is best to contact regarding this. (Name, Job Title and Email address)</i>
Response	The NIO does not use AI enabled chatbots or live Webchat for engaging with Citizens directly nor do we have plans to deploy such services in the foreseeable future.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/203
Month Issued	January 2021
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request details of the NIO's slogan and branding for events marking Northern Ireland's centenary in 2021.</i> <i>NIO recently unveiled its centenary slogan and branding, 'Our Story In The Making', as well as an accompanying website.</i> <i>Please disclose the following:</i> <i>1. The overall cost of the branding and slogan.</i> <i>2. A breakdown of these costs. This should include (but not be limited to) the individual costs of each image used on the 'Our Story In The Making' website, including a portrait of Seamus Heaney by Tai Shan Schierenberg taken from the Queen's University Belfast Collection.</i> <i>3. A copy of any documents pitching or outlining the brand identity/management/strategy and/or its development.</i>
Response	In response to your query on costs relating to the brand - these will be published in the usual way in the NIO's transparency publications. For this reason, the information is exempt from disclosure under Section 22 of the FOIA. In line with the terms of this exemption in the Freedom of Information Act, we have considered whether it would be in the public interest for us to provide you with the information ahead of publication, despite the exemption being applicable. In this case, we have concluded that the public interest favours withholding the information until we are satisfied that it is accurate. We have checked records and we do not hold the detailed breakdown that you have requested via Northern Ireland Office records as this information was collated through our external design agency.

	In relation to any documents pitching or outlining the brand identity/management/strategy and/or its development. I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office holds some information that you have asked for. However, we cannot disclose this information because the cost of complying with your request would exceed the limit set by the Freedom of Information Act. Freedom of information law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 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 locate, identify and retrieve the information would cost over £600. I 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 also find more information about Section 12(1) 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.
FOI Request Reference	FOI/20/204
Month Issued	January 2021
Request	<i>I understand that from 1977 – 1981 the Northern Ireland Office funded a scheme through Belfast City Council Community Services Department, the Department of the Environment, the Arts Council or Northern Ireland and Belfast Art College.</i>

	<i>I would be very grateful to read the arts policy documents surrounding this initial scheme to address the imagery within the murals or alternatively you could direct me to the right place to research this further.</i>
Response	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.

FOI Request Reference	FOI20/205
Month Issued	January 2021
Request	<i>This is a Freedom of Information request regarding the online branding of 'Our Story in the Making: NI Beyond 100'.</i> <i>Can you please send all correspondence between the Northern Ireland Office and Queen's University relating to the use of a portrait of the poet Seamus Heaney in the branding to mark the centenary of the establishment of Northern Ireland?</i>
Response	'Our Story in the Making: NI Beyond 100' was created to recognise the stories of the people of Northern Ireland from all communities, past and present. As you will know from the public statements we have made, permission for use of the Seamus Heaney portrait was granted by Queen's University Belfast, who hold rights to the portrait. I can confirm that we hold information within the scope of your request, but in this case we will not be providing it to you as it is exempt from disclosure as section 43 (commercial interest) is engaged. Section 43 provides that information held by a government department is exempt if its disclosure would prejudice commercial interests. The exemption is qualified, which means it is subject to a public interest test. In deciding whether to disclose the information held, we have considered the following public interest reasons in favour of disclosing the information: • increase public knowledge about the public relations role • increase public knowledge about internal press and communications expenditure We have balanced this argument in favour of disclosure against the need to: • ensure the interests of third parties are protected in a commercial environment • ensure third parties are not discouraged from engaging in future projects • ensure that officials can have free and frank conversations in respect of communications and public affairs services We have concluded in this case that the harm that would result from disclosure of the information outweighs the public interest arguments in favour of disclosure.

	ICO lo Commercial interests (section 43) We regret to advise that your request has been declined on these grounds.
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