

JULY 2021 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION RESPONSES

Year	Month	FOI Reference	Topic
2021	Jul	FOI/21/090	Ministerial meeting with newspaper journalists
2021	Jul	FOI/21/091	Ministerial meeting with Loyalist groups
2021	Jul	FOI/21/098	UK Special Envoy to the United States: appointment of Trevor Ringland
2021	Jul	FOI/21/102	Spending on social media advertising
2021	Jul	FOI/21/104	FOI round robin list: referral forms
2021	Jul	FOI/21/105	Staff travel: domestic flights to or from Northern Ireland
2021	Jul	FOI/21/107	Prisoners' voting rights
2021	Jul	FOI/21/108	Disabled staff: support provisions, sick leave and associated costs
2021	Jul	FOI/21/111	Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) decision notices: appeals
2021	Jul	FOI/21/112	Staff discipline: transphobia
2021	Jul	FOI/21/113	Spending on Union flags
2021	Jul	FOI/21/114	Correspondence on Black Lives Matter and equalities issues
2021	Jul	FOI/21/115	Staff complaints: government approach to equalities issues
2021	Jul	FOI/21/116	Mobile phone contracts
2021	Jul	FOI/21/117	Secondments
2021	Jul	FOI/21/118	Ministerial correspondence with the Prime Minister via Gmail
2021	Jul	FOI/21/119	Hikvision: electronics equipment and contracts
2021	Jul	FOI/21/120	Redaction tools
2021	Jul	FOI/21/121	Spending on England football shirts, England Euro 2020 tickets and England flags

FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/090
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>This is a request under Freedom of Information legislation. In December 2020, Brandon Lewis had a meeting with newspaper journalists to discuss the end of the Transition Period, according to transparency data.</i> <i>I would like to request the following information in relation to this meeting:</i> <i>1. Details of the where the meeting between the minister and newspaper journalists to discuss the end of the Transition Period took place, who was in attendance, and how it lasted.</i> <i>2. All documents created in connection the meeting with newspaper journalists to discuss the end of the Transition Period. This could include, but not be limited to, any minutes or notes taken at the minutes or afterwards, or any presentations prepared as part of the meeting.</i> <i>3. Email correspondence related to this meeting sent by or received by the Department/the minister in advance of, and after the meeting.</i>
Response	In relation to question 1, this meeting took place virtually with reporters present and lasted approximately 10 minutes. It is the Department's position that information relating to who was in attendance constitutes individuals personal data. Therefore this information is being withheld by way of Section 40(2) (personal data) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40 provides an exemption from the right to information if it is personal data as defined in the DPA. These state that you should not disclose information under FOIA or the EIR if: • it is the personal data of the requestor; or • it is the personal data of someone else; Additionally personal data should not be disclosed if it would contravene the data protection principles, if disclosure would contravene an objection to processing, or if the data is exempt from the right of subject access. 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.

	In relation to questions 2 and 3, we hold information within scope of your request, however this is exempt under section 35(1)(a) and (b) (formulation of government policy) and section 40(2) (personal data) of the Freedom of Information Act, <u>Section 35 (formulation of government policy)</u> Section 35 (formulation of government policy) is a qualified exemption, which means that the decision to disclose the requested material is subject to the public interest test. When assessing whether or not it was in the public interest to disclose the information to you, we took into account the following factors: <i>Public interest considerations favouring disclosure</i> • The public having a greater understanding of Government policy • Greater transparency of Government policy. <i>Public interest considerations favouring withholding</i> These public interests have been 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 discuss policy freely and frankly, exchange views on available options and understand their possible implications. • The candour of all involved would be affected by their assessment of whether the content of the discussions will be disclosed prematurely. • If discussions were routinely made public there is a risk that Ministers may feel inhibited from being frank and candid with one another. • As a result the quality of debate underlying collective decision making would decline, leading to worse informed and poorer decision making. This could potentially damage the Government's policy-making process, which remains ongoing. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, we reached the view that, on balance, the public interest favours withholding this information at this time.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/091
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>This is a request under Freedom of Information legislation. In December 2020, minister Robin Walker had meetings with the Orange Order, the Royal Black Institute and the Apprentice Boys of Derry, respectively, according to transparency data.</i>

	<i>I would like to request the following information in relation to these meetings:</i> <i>1. Details of the where each of these meetings took place, who was in attendance, and how it lasted.</i> <i>2. All documents created in connection with each of these meetings. This could include, but not be limited to, any minutes or notes taken at the minutes or afterwards, or any presentations prepared as part of the meeting.</i> <i>3. Email correspondence related to these meetings sent by or received by the Department/the minister in advance of, and after the meeting.</i>
Response	1. Details of where each of these meetings took place, who was in attendance, and how it lasted. In answer to your first question, the meetings all took place on the 15th December via video and lasted for approximately 30 minutes. Personal information has been redacted from the document under Section 40(2) (personal data) of the FOIA. Section 40 provides an exemption from the right to information if it is personal data as defined in the DPA. These state that you should not disclose information under FOIA or the EIR if: • it is the personal data of the requestor; or • it is the personal data of someone else; Additionally personal data should not be disclosed if it would contravene the data protection principles, if disclosure would contravene an objection to processing, or if the data is exempt from the right of subject access 2. All documents created in connection with each of these meetings. This could include, but not be limited to, any minutes or notes taken at the minutes or afterwards, or any presentations prepared as part of the meeting. 3. Email correspondence related to these meetings sent by or received by the Department/the minister in advance of, and after the meeting. We do hold some further information in relation to your request. However, the information you have requested is exempt under section 35(1)(a) and (b) of the Freedom of Information Act, which protects the formulation of policy and communications between Ministers. Disclosure would weaken Ministers' ability to discuss controversial and sensitive topics free from premature public scrutiny.

Section 35(1)(a) is a qualified exemption, which means that the decision to disclose the requested material is subject to the public interest test. When assessing whether or not it was in the public interest to disclose the information to you, we took into account the following factors:

Public interest considerations favouring disclosure

- The public having a greater understanding of Government policy
- Greater transparency of Government policy.

In order to facilitate this release, as can be seen, it has been necessary to redact personal data by way of section 40 (2) (personal data) of the Freedom of Information Act. Please see below further explanation with respect to the application of Section 40 (2) (personal data).

Additional to the attached document being released to you the Department also holds further information in relation to your request. This additional information, it is the Department's position, is however, exempt under section 35(1)(a) and (b) (formulation of government policy) and section 40(2)(personal data) of the Freedom of Information Act,.

Section 35 (formulation of government policy)

Section 35 (formulation of government policy) is a qualified exemption, which means that the decision to disclose the requested material is subject to the public interest test. When assessing whether or not it was in the public interest to disclose the information to you, we took into account the following factors:

Public interest considerations favouring disclosure

- The public having a greater understanding of Government policy
- Greater transparency of Government policy.

Public interest considerations favouring withholding

These public interests have been 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 discuss policy freely and frankly, exchange views on available options and understand their possible implications.

	• The candour of all involved would be affected by their assessment of whether the content of the discussions will be disclosed prematurely. • If discussions were routinely made public there is a risk that Ministers may feel inhibited from being frank and candid with one another. • As a result the quality of debate underlying collective decision making would decline, leading to worse informed and poorer decision making. This could potentially damage the Government's policy-making process, which remains ongoing. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, we reached the view that, on balance, the public interest favours withholding this information at this time. <u>Section 40 (personal data)</u> Information you have requested is also being withheld because it is exempt under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In this case, I believe disclosure would contravene data protection principle (a), which provides that personal data must be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and the Northern Ireland Office is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information. Section 40 - Guidance
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/098
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>Please could I be provided with the following</i> <u><i>Appointment of Trevor Ringland as Special Envoy to the United States</i></u> <i>1. Copies of drafts and final proofs of public advertisements for the above post</i> <i>2. Copies of relevant, documented recruitment and appointment process for the above post</i> <i>3. Any documents confirming ministerial compliance with the Government's Principles of Public Appointments and Governance Code.</i>
Response	On Questions (1) and (3), I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) holds no information falling within the scope of your request.

In respect of questions (1) and (3) I can provide some background and context that you may find helpful. The Governance Code for Public Appointments sets out the process and principles that should underpin all regulated public appointments made to bodies listed in the Public Appointments Order in Council. However, this is a UK Government direct appointment announced by the Secretary of State with the full support of the Prime Minister and as such is not regulated.

For Question (2) I can confirm that information within scope of your original request is held by the Department. It is the Department's position however that this information is exempt from disclosure by way of section 36 (effective conduct of public affairs) of the Freedom of Information Act. When relying on this exemption public authorities are required to consider the public interest in the release of the information. I shall therefore set out here the factors considered by the Department in favour of releasing and withholding the requested information:

Factors in favour of release

- The Freedom of Information Act has an underlying element of openness and transparency.
- The release of this information would engage with the public in the workings and considerations undertaken by the Department.

Factors in favour of withholding

- Department Officials engaged in sensitive discussions require a safe space in which they can debate freely and frankly.
- Department officials must be able to provide relevant advice in a protected space (without fear of future disclosure). It would affect the candour of all involved if the content of these recent discussions were disclosed prematurely. As a result the quality of discussion would decline, leading to poorer outcomes.
- Without this protected space Department officials would likely feel constrained in their ability to advise freely, frankly and fully when providing such advice. This, therefore, would likely to lead to less informative and candid advice being supplied.

It is the Department's position, when the above public interest arguments are considered, that it is not within the public interest to release this information as it would likely prejudice the Department's effective conduct of public affairs.

I would like to take this opportunity to confirm that the Department is relying on the second limb of the Section 36 exemption; would be likely to. Additionally, for clarity, the Department is also relying upon the following specific sub-sections:

36(2)(b)(i) the free and frank provision of advice

	36(2)(b)(ii) the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation 36(2)(c) would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs For further information on Section 36 (effective conduct of public affairs) exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act please visit the independent regulators, the Information Commissioner's Office, website: Section 36 https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1175/section_36_prejudice_to_effective_conduct_of_public_affairs.pdf
FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/102
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>I am writing under the Freedom of Information Act and would like to know the following.</i> 1. <i>What is the departments total spend on social media marketing between January 2021 and May 2021?</i> a. <i>What is the breakdown of this spend per channel?</i> • <i>LinkedIn,</i> • <i>Facebook,</i> • <i>Twitter,</i> • <i>Instagram,</i> • <i>YouTube,</i> • <i>TikTok,</i> • <i>Snapchat</i> 2. <i>What is the departments total spend on influencer marketing between January 2021 and May 2021?</i> 3. <i>What is the department's policy on employee social media use, if any?</i>
Response	I can confirm that we hold some information relevant to your request. If I may, I shall address each of your points in turn: 1. What is the department's total spend on social media marketing between January 2021 and May 2021? The total spend by the Department on social media marketing between January 2021 and May 2021 was £4,430. For further information with respect to the Department's recent social media spend please see the following Parliamentary Question: PQ response (UIN 8785).

	a) What is the breakdown of this spend per channel? This figure (£4,420) was divided between Facebook and Instagram. No further expenditure was allocated to the other channels mentioned in the question. 2. What is the department's total spend on influencer marketing between January 2021 and May 2021? The Department has not spent any public funds on influencer marketing between January 2021 and May 2021. 3. What is the department's policy on employee social media use, if any? Departmental employees are bound by the Civil Service Code of Conduct, which is publicly available at the links below. Civil servants must adhere to the Civil Service Code online as well as offline. Social media is a public forum and the same considerations apply as would to speaking in public or writing something for publication, either officially or in a personal capacity outside of work. Further details on propriety in digital and social media can be found in the link below. Propriety in digital and social media Civil Service Code of Conduct Government Communications Service guidance
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/104
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>For each FOI/EIR request for information and each request for internal review referred by the Northern Ireland Office to the Cabinet Office FOI Clearing House between 1 January 2021 and 31 January 2021 inclusive please supply:</i> 1. <i>The completed Clearing House Referral Form as sent to the Clearing House (Note: the form itself has been published by the Cabinet Office [1])</i> 2. <i>Where the following information has not been provided on the Referral Form or where the Referral Form was not used to make the referral, please provide:</i> a) <i>The date on which the request for information or for internal review which led to the referral was received by the department</i> b) <i>The text of the request</i> c) <i>Confirmation of whether the referral related to a request for information or a request for internal review</i> d) <i>The reason for the referral and the Clearing House trigger engaged</i> e) <i>The date on which the referral was made to the Clearing House</i>

	f) <i>The date or dates on which the Clearing House responded to the department</i> g) <i>The date on which the department provided a substantive response to the applicant</i> h) <i>If held, the name of the organisation for whom the applicant was working or on whose behalf the request was made</i> 3. <i>Any further information about the request or the applicant provided to the Clearing House which does not appear on the Referral Form.</i> <i>Please note that this request does not seek details of the ICO or tribunal cases referred to the Clearing House or the advice provided by the Clearing House to the Department.</i> <i>[1]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/970675/Clearing_House_Referral_Form_FINAL.pdf</i>
Response	<u>Question One</u> I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within scope of this element of your request as it is Department practice not to use a formal referral form. When it is required to refer to Clearing House the Northern Ireland Office FOI Team do so in a way more aligned to that described in question two. <u>Question two</u> I can confirm that the Department holds some information relevant to this element of your request. For the period requested the Northern Ireland Office referred fewer than 5 Freedom of Information cases to the Clearing House. The information is being supplied to you in this format as the release of the actual figure is likely, if placed within the public domain, offer sufficient contextual information which could, in the hands of skilled committed researchers, when combined with other sources of information, lead to the identification of individuals the present format – fewer than 5 – is designed to protect. It is the Department’s position that releasing further information with respect to these requests to points 2a, 2b, 2g and 2h would breach current data protection legislation. I am, however, able to confirm the following with respect to those within the fewer than 5 figure mentioned above: 2c. Referred cases were all initial Freedom of Information requests (there were no Internal Reviews or Environmental Information Regulations) 2d. Enquiries were all forwarded as they had been identified as round robin requests 2e. Referrals was made to the Clearing House on the 21 January 2021

	2f. Clearing House responded to the Department on the 21 January 2021 (with a substantive reply given on the 22 January 2021) It is the Department's position, therefore, that some of the information requested is exempt by way of Section 40 (personal data) of the Freedom of Information Act. The information is considered exempt by way of Section 40(2) (personal data) as these person(s) could not reasonably expect that their personal information would be disclosed; therefore, in doing so would breach current data protection legislation. For further information on Section 40 (personal data) exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act please visit the independent regulators, the Information Commissioners Office, website. <u>Question 3</u> The Department did not provide any further contextual or other types of additional information with respect to the request(s) or the applicant(s). Any request referred to Clearing House is done so in line with published criteria. Additional to those fewer than 5 referred to in Question two the Department also took guidance, but did not formally refer (either by mechanisms mentioned in question one or in question two), a further six enquiries. In these additional instances the Department communicated with Clearing House as follows: <i>Please see attached the NIO response to XXX.</i> <i>I would be grateful if you could confirm if the attached is cleared for issue.</i> <i>Our deadline for issue is XXX.</i> <i>Many thanks</i>
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/105
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I would like to know</i>

	• The total number of domestic flights, excluding journeys to and from Northern Ireland, taken by representatives of your Ministerial department in the following years: a) 2019, b) 2020, and c) 2021 to date. • How many of these total domestic flights were taken by Ministers from your department themselves. • The information for domestic flights in 2019 should be broken down into a) flights taken in January to July 2019 (or Q1 and Q2), and b) flights taken in July 2019- January 2020 (or Q3 and Q4). <i>By domestic flights I am referring to flights between any points in England, Wales and Scotland.</i> <i>By representatives of your department, I am referring to Ministers, staff, special representatives, or anyone otherwise carrying out departmental duties</i>
Response	Freedom of information law allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we estimate it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, locate, extract and then provide the information that has been asked for in a request (section 12 FOIA). In relation to your request, we have made the decision to decline your request on this basis, as to comply with the request officials would be required to open and read a range of documents held by the Department in order to extract and categorise the information, and this would involve a large amount of different records individually stored in a number of locations. 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 time frame/date range or more specific types of key phrases. 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, attached at the end of this letter. You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act, available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/12.
FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/107
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, can you please provide me with the following information?</i> <i>The UK Government's 'Restrictions on Prisoner Voting Policy Framework' provides that the following category of prisoners are eligible to vote in UK general elections:</i> • <i>Un-convicted prisoners;</i>

	• <i>Convicted but un-sentenced prisoners;</i> • <i>Persons imprisoned for contempt of court and other prisoners classified under Prison Rule 7(3);</i> • <i>Those serving a term of imprisonment in default of payment of a sum of money, adjudged to be paid on conviction;</i> • <i>Prisoners that have been released from their sentence on home detention curfew (HDC); and,</i> • <i>Prisoners in the community released on temporary licence (ROTL).</i> 1. <i>Can you please provide a list of all the categories of prisoner(s) that are entitled to vote in UK General Elections in Northern Ireland?</i>
Response	I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold information that you have asked for. The franchise for Parliamentary elections is the same across all parts of the United Kingdom and the legal restrictions on prisoners voting is set out in Section 3(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983. The restrictions on prisoner voting policy framework published by the Ministry of Justice provides guidance to prisoners and prisons and sets out the particular categories of prisoners in the GB justice system that may vote under the law. The descriptions of specific Northern Ireland prisoner types to which the law applies may be named differently to those in GB and it will be for Department of Justice Northern Ireland to issue guidance on the matter.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/108
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>Please can you provide the following:</i> 1. <i>Do you have a disability staff network? If so:</i> • <i>How long has it been running?</i> • <i>The grade of the chair and deputy chair</i> • <i>Does the network use storytelling as part of it's communication strategy?</i> 2. <i>The number of members of staff who have provided information about their disability to HR broken down by :</i> • <i>Year since 2010</i> • <i>Grade / Seniority</i> • <i>Location</i> 3. <i>Sickness absence as a result of disability or mental health issue logged by the department broken down by:</i> • <i>Year since 2010</i> • <i>Grade / Seniority</i>

	• <i>Location</i> 4. <i>Return to work rates following disability or mental health related sickness logged by the department broken down by:</i> • <i>Year since 2010</i> • <i>Grade / Seniority</i> • <i>Location</i> 5. <i>Costs (i.e. sick leave payments, salary loss, costs of replacements, adjustment costs, occupation health referrals etc) relating to disability and mental health related illness broken down by:</i> • <i>Year since 2010</i> • <i>Grade / Seniority</i> • <i>Location</i>
Response	The grade of the chair is however being withheld at this time by way of section 40(2) (personal data) of the Freedom of Information Act. It is the Department's position that this contextual information - staff grade and the fact they are the chair of the Diversity and Inclusion advocates - could be enough information to identify the individual. This information is considered exempt by way of Section 40(2) (personal data) as these person(s) could not reasonably expect that their personal information would be disclosed; therefore, in doing so would breach current data protection legislation. For further information on Section 40 (personal data) exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act please visit the independent regulators, the Information Commissioners Office, website: Section 40 https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/2614720/personal-information-section-40-and-regulation-13-version-21.pdf I am able to inform you that a Senior Civil Servant at band 1 acts as the champion of the network. The network often uses a "human story" approach to communicate with the wider department in the form of staff blogs as well as awareness sessions and other forms of learning. The NIO also retains membership to Employers for Disability NI. In response to Q2 please see the table below giving disability declaration rates for the years 2017-2021 inclusive

Year	Disability Declared	Disability Declared – No Disability	Disability Declared – Prefer not to say	Disability Status – Not Known
2017	6	54	20	37
2018	9	70	18	32
2019	13	87	15	40
2020	13	92	9	40
2021	11	86	10	46

The Northern Ireland Office has sites in Belfast and London.

Please refer to the below table to support Q3 in detailing sickness absence in working days lost as a result of mental health issues. The department does not hold sick absence information dating back as far as 2010. Annual data has been provided from 2017 to 2020, with data provided for the first quarter of 2021. The information given up to 31 March 2021, is the most recent figure reported to the Cabinet Office.

Year/Location	Belfast	London
2017	139	0
2018	66	41
2019	193	12
2020	35	0
Up to 31 March 2021	37	0

A wide range of conditions are encapsulated under the term “Mental Health”. This includes conditions such as stress, anxiety, depression, mood-affective disorders, disorders of personality and behaviour and schizophrenia.

Staff in the NIO have access to a full range of Mental Health support, for example Occupational Health, an Employee Assistance Programme or through reasonable adjustments being made.

Recognising staff wellbeing is an ongoing priority within the department; employees are encouraged to speak up if they feel under stress and staff have access to confidential support through the Employee Assistance Programme, as well as support from Mental Health First Aiders. The NIO has a Staff Wellbeing Guide through which staff can be signposted to other sources of support and a number of Resilience training events have been arranged helping staff with stress awareness management.

In response to Q4 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 provisions in 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.

We can advise, however, that during the period 2017 to 31 March 2021, less than 1% of staff members had disability or mental health related sickness. Of these staff 57% were based in Belfast and 43% in London and the overall return to work rate was 94%.

In response to Q5, some of the information you have asked for is not held in the format requested. Our occupational health referral costs and those for reasonable adjustments are not limited to the areas of disability and mental health. However, the table below shows salary costs by year, grade and location for disability or mental health reasons without confirming the exact number of staff involved as more detailed information would risk contravening the first data protection principle (see Q4 response above).

2017	Grade	Location	Salary Cost
	B/SEO	Belfast	£19,237.93
	D/EO	Belfast	£1,031

2018	Grade	Location	Salary Cost
	E/AO	London	£1,873.42
	SCS1	Belfast	£8,884.62
	A/G7	London	£2,148.19
	C/HEO	Belfast	£1,143.23
	SCS1	London	£2,709.28
	D/EO	Belfast	£850.92
	A/G7	Belfast	£2,638.71

2019	Grade	Location	Salary Cost
Including absence	SCS1	Belfast	£1,184.61

	continued from 2018			
		C/HEO	London	£1,285.69
		C/HEO	Belfast	£2,220.43
		B/SEO	Belfast	£19,729
		B/SEO	London	£155.96
	2020	Grade	Location	Salary Cost
	Including absence continued from 2019	B/SEO	Belfast	£4,110.22
	Up to 31 Mar 2021	Grade	Location	Salary Cost
		A/G7	Belfast	£3,719.53
		C/HEO	Belfast	£1,809.87

FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/111
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. It relates to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Decision Notices on freedom of information and environmental information cases.</i> <i>I would like to request the following information:</i> <i>1. Since June 2016, please state how many times this department has appealed ICO Decision Notices on freedom of information/environmental information.</i> <i>2. For each challenge, please provide the name of the case (e.g. Cabinet Office v Information Commissioner and Jenna Corderoy).</i> <i>3. For each challenge, please provide the total amount of money spent by the department. If you are able to, please provide a detailed breakdown of costs. If the challenge is still ongoing, please provide the most recent figures.</i>

	4. For each challenge, please briefly describe the outcome of the case if completed. Please indicate whether the department further appealed. If the department appealed against the outcome, please also provide the total amount of money spent by the department on the appeal as well as the name of this case.
Response	It is the Department position that any information within scope of your request would be freely available from published Information Tribunal decision notices. Therefore your request is being refused by way of Section 21 (information available by other means). Should you wish to study Information Tribunal decision notices (which detail which party brought the case to tribunal) please use the following link: https://informationrights.decisions.tribunals.gov.uk/Public/search.aspx I should point out that I searched this database with the criteria detailed below and no decision notices returned: Party: Northern Ireland Office Date: 01 January 2016 to 18 June 2021 (the date the Department received your request) For further information on Section 21 (information available by other means) of the Freedom of Information Act please visit the independent regulators, the Information Commissioners Office, website: Section 21 https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1203/information-reasonably-accessible-to-the-applicant-by-other-means-sec21.pdf

FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/112
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act. Please let me know:</i> a. <i>Numbers of staff who have been disciplined for transphobia in the last five years (January 2016 to 2021 to date) if any.</i> b. <i>Any definition of transphobia used in departmental policies</i> c. <i>Minutes of any internal meetings or copies of discussions held on trans-related issues in 2020 or 2021.</i> <i>Please note I am not looking for information on individuals in c) but for general discussions.</i>

Response	In response to your questions, please see the information below. - No staff have been disciplined for transphobia in the last five years - The NIO has a zero tolerance against all forms of bullying, harassment and victimisation. The NIO takes its HR policies from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). Transphobic abuse, harassment or bullying (name-calling/derogatory jokes, unacceptable or unwanted behaviour and intrusive questions) is a serious disciplinary offence and will be dealt with under the relevant and appropriate procedure as set out the MoJ Conduct Policy. Bullying, harassment and victimisation is described in the MOJ Conduct Policy as: Harassment is unwanted behaviour which affects a person's dignity. It can relate to age, sex, race, disability, religion, nationality or any other personal characteristic of the individual and may be continuous or a one-off incident. Basically, the actions or comments are seen by the person receiving them as demeaning and unacceptable. Bullying may include offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour or an abuse or misuse of power which aims to undermine, humiliate or injure someone. Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual or involve groups of people. Victimisation is when an individual is treated in a negative way because they make a complaint, plan to make a complaint, or have helped someone else to make a complaint. Unacceptable behaviour may include :] • Spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone; • Unwanted contact such as verbal abuse or offensive gestures; • Unwanted physical contact (including unnecessary touching, and physical threats or assaults); • Misuse of power or position such as making impossible work demands or providing too much unnecessary supervision; • Unfair treatment; • Isolating someone or encouraging them to do something illegal or unacceptable; • Ridiculing or demeaning someone, teasing them or making them the target of pranks or practical jokes; • Inappropriately commenting on a person's appearance, personal life or lifestyle; or • Displaying literature, pictures, films, videos or CDs or other items that could offend.
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	The NIO does not hold any minutes of internal meetings or copies of discussions held on trans-related issues in 2020 or 2021.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/113
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act.</i> <i>Under the act, I wish to be provided with the following information regarding the amount of money spent by the Northern Ireland Office on purchasing Union flags since March 1, 2020.</i>
Response	In response to your request, the Northern Ireland Office has not purchased any Union flags since March 1, 2020.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/114
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>I would like to submit a request under the freedom of information act about equalities issues at the department.</i> <i>1. Would it be possible to send me any correspondence from the senior management team (i.e. the people pictured on the departmental gov.uk homepage) that includes the words "black lives matter" or "white privilege" and that was sent between 25 May 2020 and 28 June 2021?</i> <i>2. Would it also be possible to send me any emails sent from senior management to all staff (i.e. general mail outs) about Black Lives Matter or other equalities issues from the same time period.</i>
Response	I can confirm that information within scope of your original request is held by the Department. We conducted a search of the "senior management team" (as indicated on our website). For element one of your request it has been determined that the Department holds no relevant in scope information; that is to say no correspondence that included the words "black lives matter" or "white privilege" between 25 May 2020 and 28 June 2021 sent from the Department's senior management team to all staff. With request to element two, "any emails sent from senior management to all staff about Black Lives Matter or other equalities issues", relevant in scope information has been located (please see Annex A below). As can be seen in order to facilitate this information release personal data has been redacted by way of section 40(2) (personal data) of the Freedom of Information Act.

	The information requested consists of personal information. The Department, therefore, considers it exempt by way of Section 40(2) (personal data) of the Freedom of Information Act. The information is considered exempt by way of Section 40(2) (personal data) as these person(s) could not reasonably expect that their personal information would be disclosed; therefore, in doing so would breach current data protection legislation. For further information on Section 40 (personal data) exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act please visit the independent regulators, the Information Commissioners Office website; Section 40 - Guidance
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/115
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>I would like to submit a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. My questions are below.</i> <i>1. How many complaints has the department received from civil servants about the government approach to equalities issues - for example about ministerial statements on race, transgenderism and other protected characteristics - between July 2019 and today?</i> <i>2. Please provide the text of those complaints if possible - obviously without revealing the name of the complainant.</i> <i>3. If it's not possible to provide the text of the complaints, please provide a summary of what each one was about. If there is a log of the complaint that has a summary, please provide that.</i>
Response	In response to your questions, the department has received no complaints from civil servants in respect of the government's approach to equality issues from July 2019 to present.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/116
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>Please provide complete answers to the following questions:</i> <i>1. How many employees are at your organisation?</i> <i>2. How many mobile phone and mobile broadband (data only) connections do you currently have?</i> <i>3. What is the split between mobile phone and mobile broadband connections?</i> <i>4. Who is your mobile phone network provider?</i> <i>5. Did you switch providers on your last renewal?</i> <i>6. Please provide a monthly breakdown of your total mobile phone contract costs for the past 12 months, and state whether VAT has been included in the numbers given.</i> <i>7. Does your contract include a hardware, tech or transformation fund?</i>

	8. <i>If the answer to question 7 is yes, what was the value of the fund upon the signing of the current contract?</i> 9. <i>How have you sourced the contract?</i> 10. <i>What is the contract term length?</i> 11. <i>How long do you have remaining on your current contract?</i> 12. <i>Who is the primary contact for this contract?</i>																										
Response	In response to questions 1, 2, 3 the Northern Ireland Office currently has 165 employees, 413 connections in total, 358 mobile phone connections and 55 mobile broadband connections (these figures include MiFi devices, laptops and tablets/iPads for external members of staff/ALB's and 90 devices earmarked for upgrades). In response to questions 4, 5 the current providers for the Northern Ireland Office are EE & Vodafone. No the Department did not switch providers during renewal. In response to question 6 please see the table below which provides a monthly breakdown of costs. The figures provided exclude VAT and the last quarter, as billable invoices for this period have not yet been received. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th><th>Cost</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>April 2020</td><td>£1,192.63</td></tr> <tr><td>May 2020</td><td>£1,296.12</td></tr> <tr><td>June 2020</td><td>£1,391.77</td></tr> <tr><td>July 2020</td><td>£4,938.99</td></tr> <tr><td>August 2020</td><td>£4,795.98</td></tr> <tr><td>September 2020</td><td>£2,938.94</td></tr> <tr><td>October 2020</td><td>£5,320.18</td></tr> <tr><td>November 2020</td><td>£5,056.73</td></tr> <tr><td>December 2020</td><td>£1,564.38</td></tr> <tr><td>January 2021</td><td>£5,093.13</td></tr> <tr><td>February 2021</td><td>£5,100.41</td></tr> <tr><td>March 2021</td><td>£5,625.92</td></tr> </tbody> </table> In response to questions 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 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	Month	Cost	April 2020	£1,192.63	May 2020	£1,296.12	June 2020	£1,391.77	July 2020	£4,938.99	August 2020	£4,795.98	September 2020	£2,938.94	October 2020	£5,320.18	November 2020	£5,056.73	December 2020	£1,564.38	January 2021	£5,093.13	February 2021	£5,100.41	March 2021	£5,625.92
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	requested is, therefore, not held by this Department. This information may be available from the Department of Finance, Northern Ireland who can be contacted at foi@finance-ni.gov.uk. In response to question 12 the information you are requesting, namely contact details specific to an individual, is exempt by way of section 40(2) of Freedom of Information Act since disclosure of this information would breach the Data Protection legalisation. For further information on Section 40 (personal data) exemption under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act please visit the independent regulators, the Information Commissioners Office website; section 40 guidance
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/117
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act. Please provide the following information (please note this request comes in several parts):</i> <i>1. Since 1st January 2019 to the current day, please indicate the number of secondees that have been received by this department. Please also provide a list of the organisations where the secondees came from.</i> <i>2. Since 1st January 2019 to the current day, please indicate the number of civil servants from this department that have been seconded to external organisations. Please also provide a list of the organisations that received these secondees.</i>
Response	Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I can confirm that the Department holds information relevant to your request. In response to question one I can confirm from the 1st January 2019 to the current day the Northern Ireland Office has received 16 secondees into the department. These individuals were seconded from the Northern Ireland Civil Service and Ards and North Down Council. In relation to question two, the Northern Ireland Office has not seconded any Civil Servants out to external organisations.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/118
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>Please confirm if the Secretary of State has ever sent an email that still exists in the sent items or deleted items of his email account to the Prime Minister at a Gmail address (or copied him in at such an address) and supply a copy of the last such email</i>

	<i>he has sent/copied him in to. Or otherwise please confirm whether there is any record of a Gmail address relating to the Prime Minister being used on his email account even if no record of an email may now exist.</i>
Response	We have conducted a search of our records and I can confirm that the Northern Ireland Office does not hold any information within the scope of your request.

FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/119
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information from the Northern Ireland Office. Please may you provide me with:</i> <i>1. Details of any electronics equipment manufactured by Hikvision (Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Co., Ltd):</i> <i>a. Purchased or leased by the department within the last five years, or;</i> <i>b. Installed in any building owned or leased by the department, or;</i> <i>c. Provided by the Department for use by staff or contractors.</i> <i>2. Details of any contracts with Hikvision or any of its UK distributors (including, but not limited to, ADI Global Distribution Ltd., COP Security, DVS Ltd., Dynamic CCTV Ltd., Eurocables Belfast Ltd., Fortus UK Ltd., Mayflex UK Ltd., Norbain SD Ltd.), signed or active within the last five years.</i>
Response	In response to your questions:- 1. The Northern Ireland Office can confirm that it has no electronic equipment manufactured by Hikvision (Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Co., Ltd) 2. The Northern Ireland Office does not have any contracts either directly or indirectly with Hikvision (Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Co., Ltd) or any of its UK distributors

FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/120
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>The questions we need help with is how do organisation like yours implement Redaction to be GDPR compliant in the Government Organisation and how it is done?</i> <i>Also,</i> <i>1. What tools they use for Redaction and what are the positives / shortcomings of these tools?</i>

	2. <i>How does Redaction work as a process in these organisations?</i> 3. <i>Is Redaction entirely manual or is it automated in anyway?</i> 4. <i>Do some organisation Redact more than others and Why?</i> 5. <i>When Redaction is done, do they keep originals?</i> 6. <i>How will a scenario of a mistaken Redaction be corrected (Is it rolled back)?</i> 7. <i>How will large volumes of document be Redacted?</i> 8. <i>Are there Redaction teams that go through documents or are documents done on a case to case basis?</i> 9. <i>Is Redaction done by the person who identify the text to be Redacted, is it done by a 3rd person or a case manager?</i>
Response	Your request has been considered under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (2000). I can confirm that the Department holds information relevant to your request. If I may I shall address each of your points in turn: 1. What tools they use for Redaction and what are the positives / shortcomings of these tools? Materials that are selected for redaction go through a process depending on their format (either physical or digital records) and the relevant redaction method is applied: Digital Records - E-Redact Physical Records - Redaction Tape It should be noted that the Department is unable to comment of the merits of these methods. 2. How does Redaction work as a process in these organisations? Redaction is a manual process within the Department. 3. Is Redaction entirely manual or is it automated in anyway? The Department's redaction process is entirely manual. 4. Do some organisation Redact more than others and Why? The Department redacts information when required; how this compares with other organisation is not known as we do not hold this information. 5. When Redaction is done, do they keep originals? When redacting originals are kept.

	6. How will a scenario of a mistaken Redaction be corrected (Is it rolled back)? Files are manually audited and double checked. The Department does not use rollback. In the event a mistaken is noted then the original is used to re-apply redactions in the correct way. 7. How will large volumes of document be redacted? Large volumes of redaction are undertaken manually. 8. Are there Redaction teams that go through documents or are documents done on a case to case basis? Redactions are applied on a case by case basis. 9. Is Redaction done by the person who identify the text to be redacted, is it done by a 3rd person or a case manager? Redaction done by a third person.
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FOI Request Reference	FOI/21/121
Month Issued	July 2021
Request	<i>I am making a request under the Freedom of Information Act. Please could you tell me, for the period since April 2021:</i> <i>How many England football shirts has the department purchased - either through direct spending or expensed spending?</i> <i>If yes, who are they for?</i> <i>And how much has been spent in total?</i> <i>Has the department paid or received any tickets for England Euro 2020 matches. If so, how many, and to what value?</i> <i>How many England flags has the department purchased in this time, and how much did they cost overall?</i>
Response	The Northern Ireland Office have purchased 0 football shirts and 0 England Flags for the period since April 2021. The department has neither paid for, nor received any tickets for England Euro 2020 matches.