

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Statistics on implementation in central government

Q2: April – June 2006

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Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("Fol Act") and the associated Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ("EIRs") came fully into force on 1 January 2005. This bulletin covers the period April to June 2006 and presents the sixth quarterly set of statistics on their implementation within central government.

The previous quarterly bulletins, together covering the period from January 2005 to March 2006, are available via the links on the following page of the government's Freedom of Information website:

<http://www.foi.gov.uk/reference/statisticsAndReports.htm>

The statistics in this bulletin relate to the handling of written requests for information received by monitored bodies during the relevant time period. **They cover only "non-routine" information requests**, and information given out on request as a part of routine business should not be counted. **Appendix A** gives a definition of a "non-routine" request, and other information on the scope of these statistics.

This bulletin presents monitoring statistics for a total of 42 central government bodies, including all major departments of state. **Appendix B** gives a full list of monitored bodies.

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Executive Summary

Departments of State reported receiving just under 4,300 “non-routine” information requests during the second quarter of 2006 (Q2). Other monitored bodies received just under 3,700 requests. Across all monitored bodies, nearly 8,000 requests were received, of which 93 per cent had been processed at the time of monitoring. This total includes 139 requests handled under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) which came into force on 1 January 2005. *[see Table 1]*

The total of 8,000 requests across all monitored bodies received in the second quarter of 2006 is 5 per cent less than the 8,400 received during the second quarter of 2005.

During Q2 of 2006, 92 per cent of all monitored bodies’ requests (excluding those “on hold” or lapsed) were “in time”, in that they were processed within the statutory deadline* or were subject to a permitted deadline extension. This figure is slightly higher than the levels reported in the previous three quarters. *[see Table 2 and Table B]*

Of all “resolvable” requests received during Q2 of 2006 (i.e. requests where it was possible to make a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought), 61 per cent were granted in full, slightly lower than the level reported in the previous three quarters. Of the remaining Q2 requests, 11 per cent of the total were withheld in part, 17 per cent were withheld in full, and the remaining 7 per cent had not yet received a substantive response. *[see Table 3]*

In the first and second quarters of 2006, monitored bodies had a cumulative total of 541 requests referred for Internal Review on the grounds that information was withheld. Of the 342 Internal Reviews with a known outcome at the time of monitoring, 75 per cent resulted in the request’s initial handling being upheld in full. *[see Table 5]*

* - 20 working days generally, 30 working days for The National Archives

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Commentary

Number of requests [see Table 1 and Table A]

Departments of State reported receiving a total of 4,293 information requests under the Freedom of Information Act and the associated Environmental Information Regulations during the quarter from 1 April – 30 June 2006 (Q2). Other monitored bodies reported having received 3,683 requests. Across all monitored bodies, a total of 7,976 requests were reported.

This overall Q2 total represents a 5.5 per cent fall from the 8,440 requests received during the corresponding quarter last year (Q2 of 2005). However, the number of requests received by Departments of State *increased* by 12 per cent compared to Q2 2005, but the total received by other monitored bodies fell by 20 per cent. There is apparently a slight rising trend in the number of requests received by Departments of State, but a slight falling trend in those received by other monitored bodies, although seasonal variability may be influencing overall request volumes.

Of the Departments of State, the Ministry of Defence reported having received 818 requests during Q2. This was the highest departmental total, some 148 (22 per cent) more than the Home Office, whose total was next highest. However, it should be noted that both departments' figures count requests received by some of their agencies (see Appendix B)

Among other monitored bodies, the Health and Safety Executive reported having received 1,484 requests, and the National Archives reported 1,150. These are the only two monitored bodies that have consistently received more than 1,000 requests during each quarter since monitoring began at the start of 2005.

These statistics show the proportion of non-routine information requests that fell fully or mostly under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) separately from FoI requests. There were 139 such requests during the quarter, accounting for under 2 per cent of all non-routine information requests received. The monitored bodies with the highest numbers of requests falling under the EIRs were the Department for Communities and Local Government with 42 requests, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) with 29 requests, and the Rural Payments Agency (27 requests).

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Status of requests at time of monitoring [see Table 1]

The large majority of requests (93 per cent) received during Q2 had been processed by the time monitoring information was collected. Of the 575 requests that were still being processed by monitored bodies, 122 (21 per cent) were reported as “on hold” or “lapsed” because a fee had been charged but no payment had been received. These requests are effectively in suspension, since public authorities are not obliged to respond until the fee has been paid.

Timeliness of response to requests [see Table 2 and Table B]

The FoI Act requires public bodies to respond to written requests for information within 20 working days of receipt (with limited exceptions, for example to allow additional time for the consideration of public interest). Across all monitored bodies, 84 per cent of requests received during Q2 of 2006 were sent a response within this standard (20-day) deadline. The corresponding figures for the five quarters since the implementation of the Act were 69, 82, 81, 81 and 83 per cent respectively.

Ninety-two per cent of requests received during Q2 were “in time”, in that they either received a response within the standard 20-day deadline or were subject to a permitted deadline extension. The corresponding figures for the previous quarters were 83, 88, 90, 89 and 90 per cent respectively.

Although the standard statutory deadline for response to a FoI request is 20 working days, a 30 working day deadline applies where requests relate wholly or partly to information transferred to the National Archives, which has provided response timeliness information on this basis.

Initial outcomes of requests [see Table 3 and Table C]

Note: *Revisions have been made to previously published statistics on initial request outcomes at the Health and Safety Executive. See Appendix A for details.*

As stated above, there were 7,976 requests reported during Q2 of 2006 across all monitored bodies, of which 122 were “on hold” awaiting a fee payment. In addition, a further 1,151 (of the 9,398 requests) sought information that was not held, and 522 were responded to with “advice and assistance” because the body handling the request needed further information in order to identify the information being sought. As a result, the remaining 7,195 requests were assumed to be “resolvable”

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requests, where it was possible to give a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought.

Of the “resolvable” requests received during Q2, 61 per cent were granted in full, 14 per cent were withheld in part, and 17 per cent were withheld in full at the time of monitoring. The remaining 8 per cent had not yet received a substantive response (whereas the equivalent figure for the previous quarter was 8 per cent).

The proportion of “resolvable” requests granted in full in Q1 was, at 61 per cent, higher than in any previous quarter (after revisions to past published data are taken into account).

Fees

The Fol Act makes provision (at Section 9) for public authorities to charge a fee for providing information requested under the Act.

Only 4 of the 42 monitored bodies reported charging fees for handling “non routine” information requests received during Q2 of 2006, a figure which has remained consistently low since the Act’s implementation. There were 275 such requests during Q2 of 2006, accounting for 3 per cent of all requests received. Almost all of these requests (269 of the 275) were handled by the National Archives.

Use of exemptions and exceptions [see Table 4]

Under the Fol Act, a public authority can only refuse to provide requested information that it holds if:

- The request is considered vexatious or repeated
- The cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit
- The information falls in one or more of the categories of exempt information (“exemptions”) listed in Part II of the Act.

There are similar arrangements that apply to certain types of information under the EIRs. These list a number of “exceptions to the duty to disclose environmental information” in Part 3 of the Regulations.

One or more of these exemptions or exceptions was applied to a total of 1,038 requests across all monitored bodies during Q2. The most commonly applied

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exemptions or exceptions were those listed at Section 40 of the FoI Act (relating to personal information) which was applied to 336 requests, Section 41 (information provided in confidence) applied to 138 requests, Section 35 (formulation of Government policy), applied to 124 requests and Section 43 (commercial interests), applied to 115 requests.

Internal Reviews of requests [see Table 5] and Appeals to the Information Commissioner [see Table 6]

Applicants are able to ask a public authority for an Internal Review if they are not content with the public authority's initial decision on whether to release requested information. This process should be a fair and thorough review of the initial decision. Requesters who are still not content with the outcome of the Internal Review can make a formal appeal to the Information Commissioner if they wish.

The Code of Practice issued under Section 45 of the FoI Act states that Internal Review procedures should "encourage a prompt determination of the complaint". However, Reviews and Appeals often relate to complex and difficult issues, and there is no time limit for initiating Review or Appeal procedures. In consequence, it can in some cases take several months from the receipt of an information request to the completion of any resulting Review or Appeal work. For this reason, statistics on Internal Reviews and Appeals are collected on a "year to date" basis, rather than for discrete quarters. In this bulletin they relate to the first and second quarters of 2006 combined.

Across all monitored bodies, 541 Internal Reviews were reported as having been initiated on the grounds that some or all of the requested information was initially withheld. The outcomes of 342 Internal Reviews were known at the time of monitoring, and the initial handling of the request under review was upheld fully in 75 per cent of these cases. Departments of State received 46 Internal Reviews per 1,000 information requests received, compared to 15 Internal Reviews per 1,000 requests among other monitored bodies.

At the time of monitoring, from the start of the year there had been 187 appeals to the Information Commissioner's office (ICO) relating to the refusal of FoI requests by bodies included in these statistics. These figures includes only those appeals which relate to withheld information, rather than purely procedural matters, and where the relevant body has been notified of the appeal by the ICO. They may therefore be different to the ICO's own figures on FoI appeals casework.

Only 40 of the 187 reported appeals had been completed at the time of monitoring.

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Of these, the public authority's initial handling of the request was fully upheld in 27 cases, and was partially upheld in a further 8 cases. In the remaining 5 cases, the applicant's complaint was upheld.

Duration of deadline extensions *[see Table 7]*

For the first time the quarterly bulletin is able to include more detailed statistics on extensions to the normal response deadline period to allow for consideration of 'public interest', as permitted under Sections 10 and 17 of the Act. Across all monitored bodies, there were 1,281 requests (7 per cent of the total received) which were subject to permitted deadline extensions during the first two quarters of 2006 (676 during Q1, 605 during Q2).

Most participating bodies were able to provide information on the duration of deadline extensions, but not all. This data is available for 913 of these 1,281 requests. The statistics in the remainder of this section therefore do not necessarily reflect the complete picture across all monitored bodies.

Of the 913 deadline-extended requests for which we have data, 611 had been processed in full at the time of monitoring. Among fully-processed requests, the commonest period for which a deadline was extended was between 16 and 20 working days, accounting for 24 per cent of all extensions. Sixty per cent of completed, deadline-extended requests were subject to extensions of not more than 20 working days, and 85 per cent were subject to extensions of not more than 40 working days.

Departmental name changes

Please refer to note 1 in Appendix B for full details of departmental name changes that have occurred since the publication of the Q1 2006 FoI monitoring report.

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TABLE 1

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 April - 30 June 2006, and their status at time of monitoring¹

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring ¹			
		Processed	"On hold" or lapsed ²	Still being processed	Number handled under EIRs ³
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	7,976	7,401	122	453	139
TOTAL for Departments of State only	4,293	3,918	3	374	95
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,683	3,483	119	79	44
Departments of State					
Attorney General's Office	17	17	0	2	0
Cabinet Office	194	178	0	16	4
Department for Communities and Local Government <i>plus Deputy Prime Minister's Office</i>	169	160	1	8	42
Department for Constitutional Affairs #	15	13	0	2	0
Department for Education and Skills	168	154	0	14	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	110	105	0	5	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	91	83	0	8	29
Department for International Development	73	69	0	4	0
Department for Transport #	448	424	0	24	14
Department for Work and Pensions #	285	273	0	12	2
Department of Culture, Media and Sport #	92	85	0	7	0
Department of Health	347	332	0	15	0
Department of Trade and Industry	159	135	0	24	0
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	260	235	0	25	1
HM Treasury	304	282	0	22	0
Home Office #	670	567	0	103	0
Ministry of Defence #	818	740	0	78	3
Northern Ireland Office	41	34	2	5	0
Privy Council Office	12	12	0	0	0
Scotland Office	7	7	0	0	0
Wales Office	13	13	0	0	0

TABLE 1 continued

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 April - 30 June 2006, and their status at time of monitoring¹

Government body	Total requests received	Request status at time of monitoring ¹			
		Processed	"On hold" or lapsed ²	Still being processed	Number handled under EIRs
<i>Other bodies included in monitoring</i>					
Central Office of Information	4	4	0	0	0
Charity Commission	54	53	0	1	0
Crown Prosecution Service	75	74	0	1	0
Debt Management Office	64	64	0	0	0
Export Credits Guarantee Department	14	8	0	6	7
Food Standards Agency	37	34	0	3	1
Health and Safety Executive	1,484	1,457	1	26	0
HM Land Registry	12	12	0	0	0
HM Revenue and Customs	277	265	0	12	0
National Archives	1,150	1,005	118	27	4
National Savings and Investments	15	15	0	0	1
Office for National Statistics	31	30	0	1	0
Office for Standards in Education	131	131	0	0	0
Office of Fair Trading	69	69	0	0	0
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	53	53	0	7	3
Office of Rail Regulation	43	43	0	0	0
Office of Water Services (OFWAT)	22	22	0	0	0
Ordnance Survey	35	34	0	1	1
Royal Mint	2	2	0	0	0
Rural Payments Agency	44	41	0	3	27
Serious Fraud Office	6	6	0	0	0
Treasury Solicitor's Department	61	61	0	0	0

- Figures supplied by these departments of state count non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. Appendix B gives full details.

Notes

1 - Monitoring returns were submitted to the Department for Constitutional Affairs during the first two weeks of August 2006

2 - Requests "on hold" are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received at the time of monitoring. These requests are effectively suspended since public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made.

Where a fee is charged and the deadline for payment expires, the request is deemed to have "lapsed" as no further action is required from the public authority.

3 - The amended Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs) came into force on 1 January 2005 to coincide with the FoI Act. For further information on the EIRs, see the main Notes section of this publication.

TABLE 2

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 April - 30 June 2006

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Timeliness of response			Percentage of requests meeting 20-day deadline	Percentage of requests "in time" (i.e. meeting deadline or with permitted extension)
		20-day deadline met	Permitted extension ² to 20-day deadline	Late response (i.e. 20-day deadline missed)		
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	7,854	6,592	605	657	84%	92%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	4,290	3,371	409	510	79%	88%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,564	3,221	196	147	90%	96%
Departments of State						
Attorney General's Office	17	12	2	3	*	*
Cabinet Office	194	159	26	9	82%	95%
Department for Communities and Local Government	168	140	13	15	83%	91%
<i>plus Deputy Prime Minister's Office</i>	15	7	2	6	*	*
Department for Constitutional Affairs #	168	141	11	16	84%	90%
Department for Education and Skills	110	91	1	18	83%	84%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	91	63	15	13	69%	86%
Department for International Development	73	62	10	1	85%	99%
Department for Transport #	448	389	21	38	87%	92%
Department for Work and Pensions #	285	258	2	25	91%	91%
Department of Culture, Media and Sport #	92	74	8	10	80%	89%
Department of Health	347	280	24	43	81%	88%
Department of Trade and Industry	159	101	50	8	64%	95%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	260	200	39	21	77%	92%
HM Treasury	304	256	27	21	84%	93%
Home Office #	670	434	107	129	65%	81%
Ministry of Defence #	818	652	42	124	80%	85%
Northern Ireland Office	39	28	6	5	72%	87%
Privy Council Office	12	9	0	3	*	*
Scotland Office	7	6	0	1	*	*
Wales Office	13	9	3	1	*	*

TABLE 2 continued

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 April - 30 June 2006

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Timeliness of response			Percentage of requests meeting 20-day deadline	Percentage of requests "in time" (i.e. meeting deadline or with permitted extension)
		20-day deadline met	Permitted extension ² to 20-day deadline	Late response (i.e. 20-day deadline missed)		
Other bodies included in monitoring						
Central Office of Information	4	4	0	0	*	*
Charity Commission	54	50	0	4	93%	93%
Crown Prosecution Service	75	71	1	3	95%	96%
Debt Management Office	64	64	0	0	100%	100%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	14	3	6	5	*	*
Food Standards Agency	37	31	6	0	84%	100%
Health and Safety Executive	1,483	1,343	79	61	91%	96%
HM Land Registry	12	11	0	1	*	*
HM Revenue and Customs	277	239	9	29	86%	90%
National Archives [^]	1,032	937	77	18	91%	98%
National Savings and Investments	15	15	0	0	*	*
Office for National Statistics	31	29	1	1	94%	97%
Office for Standards in Education	131	126	1	4	96%	97%
Office of Fair Trading	69	62	0	7	90%	90%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	53	46	2	5	87%	91%
Office of Rail Regulation	43	40	3	0	93%	100%
Office of Water Services (OFWAT)	22	20	2	0	91%	100%
Ordnance Survey	35	31	1	3	89%	91%
Royal Mint	2	2	0	0	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	44	31	8	5	70%	89%
Serious Fraud Office	6	6	0	0	*	*
Treasury Solicitor's Department	61	60	0	1	98%	98%

Notes

* - These percentages are not shown because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer

- Figures supplied by these departments of state count non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. Appendix B gives full details.

[^] - Although the standard statutory deadline for responding to an information request is 20 working days, a 30-day deadline applies where requests relate wholly or partly to archived information. The National Archive timeliness figures are therefore reported on this basis.

1 - Requests "on hold" or "lapsed" are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received. These requests are effectively suspended since public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made. They are therefore excluded from the calculation of timeliness measures.

2 - "Permitted extensions" include:

Requests where the 20-day deadline for response under the Freedom of Information Act is extended to allow for consideration of the balance of the public interest.

Requests where the 20-day deadline for response under the Environmental Information Regulations is extended because of the complexity or volume of the request

TABLE 3

Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 April - 30 June 2006

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Requests where advice and assistance ² provided	Requests where information not held	Total "resolvable" requests ³	Initial outcome of request				Percentage of resolvable requests granted in full	Percentage of resolvable requests withheld in full
					Granted in full	Partially withheld	Fully withheld ⁴	Response not yet provided ⁵		
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	7,854	601	1,397	5,856	3,551	838	1,014	453	61%	17%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	4,290	347	711	3,232	2,001	349	510	372	62%	16%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,564	254	686	2,624	1,550	489	504	81	59%	19%
Departments of State										
Attorney General's Office	17	0	5	12	5	4	3	0	*	*
Cabinet Office	194	5	39	150	58	21	55	16	39%	37%
Department for Communities and Local Government	168	3	25	140	101	19	12	8	72%	9%
<i>plus Deputy Prime Minister's Office</i>	15	0	3	12	6	3	1	2	*	*
Department for Constitutional Affairs #	168	12	52	104	40	5	45	14	38%	43%
Department for Education and Skills	110	11	14	85	57	15	8	5	67%	9%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	91	5	9	77	46	12	11	8	60%	14%
Department for International Development	73	0	13	60	42	8	6	4	70%	10%
Department for Transport #	448	12	34	402	312	43	23	24	78%	6%
Department for Work and Pensions #	285	17	15	253	204	19	18	12	81%	7%
Department of Culture, Media and Sport #	92	11	11	70	44	12	7	7	63%	10%
Department of Health	347	18	80	249	170	30	34	15	68%	14%
Department of Trade and Industry	159	3	20	136	65	11	36	24	48%	26%
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	260	49	33	178	75	36	42	25	42%	24%
HM Treasury	304	64	79	161	98	6	35	22	61%	22%
Home Office #	670	106	158	406	159	39	105	103	39%	26%
Ministry of Defence #	818	28	97	693	487	60	68	78	70%	10%
Northern Ireland Office	39	2	9	28	18	4	1	5	64%	4%
Privy Council Office	12	1	7	4	3	1	0	0	*	*
Scotland Office	7	0	4	3	3	0	0	0	*	*
Wales Office	13	0	4	9	8	1	0	0	*	*

TABLE 3 continued

Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 April - 30 June 2006

Government body	Total requests received (excluding on-hold and lapsed ¹)	Requests where advice and assistance ² provided	Requests where information not held	Total "resolvable" requests ³	Initial outcome of request				Percentage of resolvable requests granted in full	Percentage of resolvable requests withheld in full
					Granted in full	Partially withheld	Fully withheld ⁴	Response not yet provided ⁵		
Other bodies included in monitoring										
Central Office of Information	4	0	1	3	3	0	0	0	*	*
Charity Commission	54	0	5	49	25	11	12	1	51%	24%
Crown Prosecution Service	75	3	25	47	16	5	25	1	34%	53%
Debt Management Office	64	0	0	64	64	0	0	0	100%	0%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	14	0	0	14	2	3	3	6	*	*
Food Standards Agency	37	1	1	35	10	16	6	3	29%	17%
Health and Safety Executive	1,483	11	327	1,145	577	317	225	26	50%	20%
HM Land Registry	12	0	1	11	11	0	0	0	*	*
HM Revenue and Customs	277	10	37	230	105	46	67	12	46%	29%
National Archives	1,032	199	205	628	493	18	90	27	79%	14%
National Savings and Investments	15	2	3	10	9	0	1	0	*	*
Office for National Statistics	31	0	10	21	13	2	5	1	62%	24%
Office for Standards in Education	131	0	14	117	56	33	28	0	48%	24%
Office of Fair Trading	69	4	27	38	14	17	7	0	37%	18%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	53	4	8	41	26	2	13	0	63%	32%
Office of Rail Regulation	43	1	12	30	24	4	2	0	80%	7%
Office of Water Services (OFWAT)	22	2	3	17	11	1	5	0	*	*
Ordnance Survey	35	5	2	28	17	8	2	1	61%	7%
Royal Mint	2	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	44	8	1	35	25	3	4	3	71%	11%
Serious Fraud Office	6	0	2	4	3	1	0	0	*	*
Treasury Solicitor's Department	61	4	2	55	45	2	8	0	82%	15%

Notes

* - These percentages are not shown because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer

- Figures supplied by these departments of state count non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. Appendix B gives full details.

1 - Requests "on hold" or "lapsed" are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received. These requests are effectively suspended since public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made.

2 - "Advice and Assistance" would be provided to a requester when the government body "reasonably requires further information in order to identify and locate the information requested". See section 1(3) of the Freedom of Information Act for further detail-

3 - "Resolvable requests" are all those where it is possible to make a substantive decision on whether to release the requested information. They exclude requests which are lapsed or "on-hold", where the information was not held, and where it was necessary to provide advice and assistance (see note above) since in each of these cases it would not have been possible to resolve the request in the form it was asked.

4 - "Fully withheld" requests include those which were refused because it was estimated that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit

5 - This table counts as "resolvable" all requests where a response has not yet been provided. This assumption is likely to be generally true but may be incorrect in a small number of cases.

It should also be noted that requests where a response has not yet been provided are more likely to involve considerations which are complex and finely balanced. As a result, it cannot be assumed that these requests will be granted and refused in the same proportions as "resolvable" requests in general.

TABLE 4

Exemptions and exceptions¹ applied by monitored bodies* when withholding non-trivial information requests received from 1 April - 30 June 2006

Exemption / Exception ¹	Number of requests where exemption used		
	Departments of State only	Other monitored bodies*	TOTAL
Total number of requests where one or more exemptions or exceptions were applied	603	435	1,038
Number of requests where each exemption (listed in Part II of FoI Act²) was applied			
S(22) - Information intended for future publication	38	11	49
S(23) - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters	26	8	34
S(24) - National security	12	0	12
S(26) - Defence	11	2	13
S(27) - International relations	45	14	59
S(28) - Relations within the United Kingdom	2	0	2
S(29) - The economy	8	2	10
S(30) - Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities	6	33	39
S(31) - Law enforcement	44	53	97
S(32) - Court records, etc	7	5	12
S(33) - Audit functions	1	4	5
S(34) - Parliamentary privilege	2	0	2
S(35) - Formulation of Government policy, etc	111	13	124
S(36) - Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs	46	8	54
S(37) - Communications with Her Majesty, etc and honours	20	0	20
S(38) - Health and Safety	20	9	29
S(39) - Environmental information	³	³	³
S(40) - Personal information	155	181	336
S(41) - Information provided in confidence	41	97	138
S(42) - Legal professional privilege	19	24	43
S(43) - Commercial interests	75	40	115
S(44) - Prohibitions on disclosure	18	89	107
Number of requests where each exception (listed in Part 3 of EIRs) was applied			
3(a) - Exempt personal data	2	1	3
4(b) - Manifestly unreasonable	0	4	4
4(c) - Too general	0	0	0
4(d) - Work in progress / incomplete data	5	0	5
4(e) - Internal communications	19	3	22
5(a) - Adverse effect on international relations, defence, national security, public safety	2	3	5
5(b) - Adverse effect on course of justice or conduct of enquiries	1	0	1
5(c) - Adverse effect on intellectual property rights	0	0	0
5(d) - Impinges on confidentiality of a public authority's work	0	1	1
5(e) - Impinges on confidentiality of commercial or industrial information	0	0	0
5(f) - Adverse effect on interests of person who provided the information	0	0	0
5(g) - Adverse effect on protection of environment to which information relates	0	0	0

Notes

* - A full list of monitored bodies is shown in Appendix B. This also includes details of those departments of state whose figures included non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. The Health and Safety Executive did not provide details on specific exemptions used, and this table therefore excludes information requests handled by this body.

1 - "Exemptions" refers to the provisions in Part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act (and the similar "exceptions" in Part 3 of the Environmental Information Regulations) which classify certain types of information as exempt from the release obligations. More than one exemption or exception can apply to a single information request.

2 - The exemption described in section 21 of the Act ("Information accessible ... by other means") is not listed here, because requests falling under this exemption do not meet the formal definition of a "non-routine" request and therefore are not counted in these monitoring statistics.

3 - The exemption listed at section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act ("Environmental Information") effectively states that information requests which falls within the scope of the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) should be handled as these Regulations specify. Requests for environmental information which are refused should apply one of the EIR exceptions listed above.

TABLE 5

Outcomes of Internal Reviews¹ of non-trivial information requests received by monitored bodies² from 1 January – 30 June 2006³, where the requested information was initially withheld

	Departments of State only	Other monitored bodies²	TOTAL
Total number of Internal Reviews (of requests where information was withheld)	421	120	541
Number of Internal Reviews with known outcome at time of monitoring	249	93	342
Of Internal Reviews with known outcome, number where:			
Initial handling of request upheld in full	195	61	256
Initial handling of request upheld in part	37	23	60
Initial handling overturned	17	9	26
Percentage of Internal Reviews where initial handling was upheld in full	78%	66%	75%

Notes

1. Applicants are able to ask a public authority for an "Internal Review" if they are not content with the public authority's initial decision on whether to release requested information. This process should be a fair and impartial review of the initial decision. Requesters who are still not content with the outcome of the Internal Review can make a formal appeal to the Information Commissioner if they wish (see Section 50 of the FoI Act)
2. A full list of monitored bodies is shown in Appendix B. This also includes details of those departments of state whose figures included non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves.
3. This table covers **the whole of 2006** to date.

TABLE 6

Outcomes of Appeals to the Information Commissioner¹ about the refusal of information requests received by monitored bodies² from 1 January – 30 June 2006³

	Departments of State only	Other monitored bodies ²	TOTAL
Total number of requests where initial handling was appealed	142	45	187
Number of requests where appeal outcome is known at time of monitoring	32	8	40
Of appeals with known outcome, number where:			
Initial handling of request upheld in full	22	5	27
Initial handling of request upheld in part	6	2	8
Initial handling overturned	4	1	5
Percentage of appeals where initial handling was upheld in full	69%	63%	68%

Notes

1. If an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of a public authority's "Internal Review" of the handling of their information request, they may make a formal appeal to the Information Commissioner. If the Commissioner decides that the public authority has not complied with the FoI Act, he may issue a "decision notice" setting out the steps to be taken in order to achieve compliance.

2. A full list of monitored bodies is shown in Appendix B. This also includes details of those departments of state whose figures included non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves.

3. This table covers **the whole of 2006** to date.

TABLE 7

Duration of deadline extensions to allow for the consideration of Public Interest¹ which were applied to information requests received by monitored bodies² from 1 January – 30 June 2006³

	Departments of State only		Other monitored bodies ²		TOTAL	
Total number of requests subject to deadline extensions to allow for the consideration of the Public Interest	840		73		913	
Of these, number which had been processed in full at the time of monitoring	556		55		611	
Of these fully-processed requests, where the extension to the deadline was:	<u>Number</u>	<u>Cumulative Percentage</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Cumulative Percentage</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Cumulative Percentage</u>
5 days or less	49	9%	7	13%	56	9%
Between 6 and 10 days	90	25%	12	35%	102	26%
Between 11 and 15 days	53	35%	7	47%	60	36%
Between 16 and 20 days	132	58%	17	78%	149	60%
Between 21 and 30 days	86	74%	6	89%	92	75%
Between 31 and 40 days	56	84%	4	96%	60	85%
More than 40	90	100%	2	100%	92	100%

Notes

1. Public authorities are allowed to extend the standard deadline for responding to an information request (normally 20 working days) to allow for the consideration of public interest issues. See Section 10(2) of the FoI Act.

2. A full list of monitored bodies is shown in Appendix B. This also includes details of those departments of state whose figures included non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. Please note that most participating bodies were able to provide data for use in this table, but not all.

3. This table covers **the whole of 2006** to date.

TABLE A

Number of non-routine information requests received during each calendar quarter of 2005 and 2006

Government body	Total requests received							
	2005				2006			
	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–June	Q3: July–Sept	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–June	Q3: July–Sept	Q4: Oct–Dec
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	13,092	8,440	8,077	7,729	9,398	7,976		
TOTAL for Departments of State only	7,733	3,828	3,838	3,975	4,916	4,293		
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	5,359	4,612	4,239	3,754	4,482	3,683		
Departments of State								
Attorney General's Office	80	15	12	13	13	17		
Cabinet Office	764	203	179	191	244	194		
Department for Communities and Local Government <i>plus Deputy Prime Minister's Office</i>	393 0	182 0	186 0	155 0	185 0	169 15		
Department for Constitutional Affairs #	273	121	90	105	200	168		
Department for Education and Skills	245	95	78	130	165	110		
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	344	176	122	126	161	91		
Department for International Development	94	57	56	52	85	73		
Department for Transport #	591	302	344	282	439	448		
Department for Work and Pensions #	437	264	407	381	403	285		
Department of Culture, Media and Sport #	185	83	84	97	152	92		
Department of Health	424	236	240	305	388	347		
Department of Trade and Industry	341	192	131	175	201	159		
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	574	256	229	256	316	260		
HM Treasury	277	169	310	396	307	304		
Home Office #	710	337	409	448	673	670		
Ministry of Defence #	1,843	1,039	851	784	905	818		
Northern Ireland Office	80	30	40	38	55	41		
Privy Council Office	16	25	20	13	8	12		
Scotland Office	36	23	38	18	10	7		
Wales Office	26	23	12	10	6	13		

TABLE A continued

Number of non-routine information requests received during each calendar quarter of 2005 and 2006

Government body	Total requests received							
	2005				2006			
	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–June	Q3: July–Sept	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–June	Q3: July–Sept	Q4: Oct–Dec
<i>Other bodies included in monitoring</i>								
Central Office of Information	21	6	3	0	2	4		
Charity Commission	94	43	61	66	42	54		
Crown Prosecution Service	143	84	92	79	83	75		
Debt Management Office	78	55	83	59	90	64		
Export Credits Guarantee Department	34	2	15	13	18	14		
Food Standards Agency	102	71	58	66	89	37		
Health and Safety Executive	2,085	1,754	1,558	1,666	1,599	1,484		
HM Land Registry	94	35	27	25	28	12		
HM Revenue and Customs +	511	246	245	249	317	277		
National Archives	1,925	1,681	1,560	1,046	1,624	1,150		
National Savings and Investments	8	2	5	18	8	15		
Office for National Statistics	71	35	28	28	31	31		
Office for Standards in Education	133	205	145	102	129	131		
Office of Fair Trading	108	82	46	62	107	69		
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	156	142	131	73	87	53		
Office of Rail Regulation	48	19	24	33	54	43		
Office of Water Services (OFWAT)	32	20	12	20	25	22		
Ordnance Survey	56	26	31	36	45	35		
Royal Mint	3	3	2	2	2	2		
Rural Payments Agency	74	59	53	49	48	44		
Serious Fraud Office	19	9	12	19	8	6		
Treasury Solicitor's Department	75	33	48	43	46	61		

Notes

Figures supplied by these departments of state count non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. Appendix B gives full details.

+ HM Revenue and Customs was created on 1 April 2005, as a merger of the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise.

TABLE B

Proportion of requests answered "in time" during each calendar quarter of 2005 and 2006 (see footnote)

Government body	Proportion of requests answered "in time" (see footnote)							
	2005				2006			
	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–June	Q3: July–Sept	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–June	Q3: July–Sept	Q4: Oct–Dec
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	83%	88%	90%	89%	90%	92%		
TOTAL for Departments of State only	75%	80%	86%	87%	86%	88%		
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	93%	95%	94%	91%	95%	96%		
Departments of State								
Attorney General's Office	78%	*	*	*	*	*		
Cabinet Office	80%	87%	91%	94%	92%	95%		
Department for Communities and Local Government <i>plus Deputy Prime Minister's Office</i>	75% *	73% *	78% *	84% *	78% *	91% *		
Department for Constitutional Affairs #	88%	73%	94%	90%	93%	90%		
Department for Education and Skills	89%	93%	94%	95%	59%	84%		
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	80%	90%	93%	92%	89%	86%		
Department for International Development	76%	89%	100%	100%	99%	99%		
Department for Transport #	88%	88%	87%	84%	88%	92%		
Department for Work and Pensions #	91%	88%	93%	93%	90%	91%		
Department of Culture, Media and Sport #	91%	75%	77%	85%	87%	89%		
Department of Health	57%	71%	79%	85%	82%	88%		
Department of Trade and Industry	67%	80%	86%	89%	95%	95%		
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	83%	80%	91%	93%	91%	92%		
HM Treasury	41%	64%	79%	79%	89%	93%		
Home Office #	40%	60%	79%	82%	92%	81%		
Ministry of Defence #	81%	83%	85%	86%	81%	85%		
Northern Ireland Office	86%	67%	95%	89%	80%	87%		
Privy Council Office	*	100%	*	*	*	*		
Scotland Office	75%	87%	82%	*	*	*		
Wales Office	92%	96%	*	*	*	*		

* - These percentages are not shown because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer

TABLE B continued

Proportion of requests answered "in time" during each calendar quarter of 2005 and 2006 (see footnote)

Government body	Proportion of requests answered "in time" (see footnote)							
	2005				2006			
	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-June	Q3: July-Sept	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-June	Q3: July-Sept	Q4: Oct-Dec
Other bodies included in monitoring								
Central Office of Information	95%	*	*	*	*	*		
Charity Commission	93%	93%	95%	82%	69%	93%		
Crown Prosecution Service	99%	90%	90%	100%	89%	96%		
Debt Management Office	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%		
Export Credits Guarantee Department	91%	*	*	*	*	*		
Food Standards Agency	96%	96%	100%	97%	100%	100%		
Health and Safety Executive	90%	95%	95%	88%	95%	96%		
HM Land Registry	99%	100%	96%	100%	96%	*		
HM Revenue and Customs +	86%	82%	78%	75%	83%	90%		
National Archives ^	99%	99%	96%	99%	99%	98%		
National Savings and Investments	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Office for National Statistics	100%	97%	100%	96%	97%	97%		
Office for Standards in Education	89%	91%	83%	89%	96%	97%		
Office of Fair Trading	98%	93%	100%	97%	89%	90%		
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	92%	94%	96%	100%	94%	94%		
Office of Rail Regulation	100%	*	100%	100%	100%	100%		
Office of Water Services (OFWAT)	100%	*	*	*	100%	100%		
Ordnance Survey	98%	100%	97%	94%	98%	91%		
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Rural Payments Agency	73%	97%	96%	100%	94%	89%		
Serious Fraud Office	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Treasury Solicitor's Department	97%	100%	98%	95%	100%	98%		

- Figures supplied by these departments of state count non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. Appendix B

+ HM Revenue and Customs was created on 1 April 2005, as a merger of the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise. Q1 2005 figures for this department reflect the combined FoI work of its two predecessor departments.

* - These percentages are not shown because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer

^ - Although the standard statutory deadline for responding to an information request is 20 working days, a 30-day deadline applies where requests relate wholly or partly to archived information. The National Archives' timeliness figures are therefore reported on this basis.

Notes

A request is "in time" if it was answered within the statutory response deadline, or within a permitted extension to this deadline.

Permitted extensions include:

Requests where the 20-day deadline for response under the Freedom of Information Act is extended to allow for consideration of the balance of the public interest.

Requests where the 20-day deadline for response under the Environmental Information Regulations is extended because of the complexity or volume of the request.

Requests "on hold" or "lapsed" are those where a fee has been charged but no payment has been received. These requests are effectively suspended since public authorities are not obliged to respond until payment has been made. They are therefore excluded from this calculation.

TABLE C

Proportion of resolvable requests granted in full during each calendar quarter of 2005 and 2006 (see footnote)

Government body	Proportion of requests granted in full							
	2005				2006			
	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–June	Q3: July–Sept	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–June	Q3: July–Sept	Q4: Oct–Dec
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	54%	59%	58%	58%	59%	61%		
TOTAL for Departments of State only	51%	55%	61%	60%	61%	62%		
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	58%	63%	54%	56%	56%	59%		
Departments of State								
Attorney General's Office	19%	*	*	*	*	*		
Cabinet Office	29%	46%	38%	54%	45%	39%		
Department for Communities and Local Government <i>plus Deputy Prime Minister's Office</i>	58%	52%	72%	67%	61%	72%		
Department for Constitutional Affairs #	46%	40%	48%	40%	40%	38%		
Department for Education and Skills	51%	50%	70%	62%	51%	67%		
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	59%	55%	62%	64%	50%	60%		
Department for International Development	62%	41%	88%	63%	83%	70%		
Department for Transport #	76%	66%	74%	74%	78%	78%		
Department for Work and Pensions #	68%	69%	85%	83%	83%	81%		
Department of Culture, Media and Sport #	54%	56%	42%	61%	57%	63%		
Department of Health	59%	66%	82%	73%	70%	68%		
Department of Trade and Industry	21%	34%	44%	54%	54%	48%		
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	20%	30%	36%	33%	43%	42%		
HM Treasury	29%	28%	26%	38%	46%	61%		
Home Office #	28%	36%	50%	38%	49%	39%		
Ministry of Defence #	67%	69%	68%	68%	69%	70%		
Northern Ireland Office	26%	*	47%	71%	49%	64%		
Privy Council Office	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Scotland Office	18%	*	19%	*	*	*		
Wales Office	*	*	*	*	*	*		

* - These percentages are not shown because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer

TABLE C continued

Proportion of resolvable requests granted in full during each calendar quarter of 2005 and 2006 (see footnote)

Government body	Proportion of requests granted in full							
	2005				2006			
	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–June	Q3: July–Sept	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–June	Q3: July–Sept	Q4: Oct–Dec
Other bodies included in monitoring								
Central Office of Information	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Charity Commission	90%	67%	79%	71%	53%	51%		
Crown Prosecution Service	26%	15%	20%	40%	33%	34%		
Debt Management Office	100%	100%	100%	98%	99%	100%		
Export Credits Guarantee Department	50%	*	*	*	*	*		
Food Standards Agency	36%	35%	36%	39%	40%	29%		
Health and Safety Executive ^	-	-	43%	45%	42%	50%		
HM Land Registry	92%	85%	96%	76%	83%	*		
HM Revenue and Customs +	49%	56%	47%	48%	52%	46%		
National Archives	84%	90%	66%	79%	72%	79%		
National Savings and Investments	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Office for National Statistics	60%	41%	36%	*	59%	62%		
Office for Standards in Education	69%	61%	54%	37%	49%	48%		
Office of Fair Trading	28%	25%	24%	33%	59%	37%		
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	87%	90%	95%	88%	73%	63%		
Office of Rail Regulation	88%	*	*	96%	81%	80%		
Office of Water Services (OFWAT)	73%	*	*	*	*	*		
Ordnance Survey	85%	*	82%	84%	66%	61%		
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Rural Payments Agency	38%	47%	61%	59%	69%	71%		
Serious Fraud Office	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Treasury Solicitor's Department	37%	56%	44%	59%	70%	82%		

- Figures supplied by these departments of state count non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. Appendix B gives full details.

+ - HM Revenue and Customs was created on 1 April 2005, as a merger of the Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise. Q1 2005 figures for this department reflect the combined FoI work of its two predecessor departments.

* - These percentages are not shown because the number of qualifying requests is 20 or fewer

^ - This table contains revisions made to previously-published figures for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Government-wide totals have also been affected. It was not possible to produce figures for Q1 and Q2 of 2005 on a consistent basis and these columns have therefore been left blank for the HSE, with government-wide totals calculated using estimated HSE data. See Appendix A for a full explanation of this revision.

Notes

"Resolvable requests" are all those where it would have been possible to provide a substantive response. They exclude requests which are lapsed or "on-hold", where the information was not held, and where it was necessary to provide advice and assistance to the requester, since in each of these cases it would not have been possible to resolve the request in the form it was asked.

Notes

1. The statistics in this bulletin relate to the handling by central government bodies of information requests received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoI Act) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs). They are collected and published by the Department for Constitutional Affairs, with assistance from Freedom of Information officers across central government.
2. The FoI Act received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000. Under the Act, anybody may request information from a public authority which has functions in England, Wales and/or Northern Ireland. The Act confers two statutory rights on applicants:
 - To be told whether or not the public authority holds that information; and if so,
 - To have that information communicated to them.

These statutory rights came into force on 1 January 2005. The Department for Constitutional Affairs is the lead department responsible for the FoI Act. Further information is available on the Freedom of Information pages of our website at:

<http://www.foi.gov.uk/index.htm>

3. The (amended) EIRs also came into force on 1 January 2005, to coincide with the FoI Act. They clarify and extend previous rights to environmental information held by public authorities. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is the lead department responsible for the EIRs. Further information is available from their website at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/opengov/eir/index.htm>

4. These statistics are derived from monitoring returns submitted to the Department for Constitutional Affairs in early August 2006. They relate to information requests received during the period 1 April – 30 June 2006. The collection of monitoring data began on the 21st working day after the last day of this period (i.e. on 1 August 2006), since 20 working days is the statutory deadline for public authorities to respond to information requests under both the FoI Act and the EIRs. The large majority of data were received during the middle two weeks of August 2006.
5. Only “non-routine” information requests are counted in these statistics. Important notes on the scope and consistency of these statistics are given in **Appendix A**.
6. These statistics cover a total of **42** central government bodies. At the commencement of the Act there were 43, but from Q2 of 2005 onwards there have been 42, following the creation of HM Revenue and Customs (a merger of the previously separate Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise) on 1 April 2005. A full list of monitored bodies is shown in **Appendix B**.

7. This is the sixth quarterly statistical bulletin on the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that unless stated otherwise:
- figures on the initial processing of information requests (i.e. timeliness of response, outcome, etc.) are shown on a quarterly basis and relate to requests received during the period from 1 April 2006 to 30 June 2006, but—
 - figures on any follow-up activity (i.e. Internal Reviews and Appeals to the Information Commissioner) are shown on a “year to date” basis and, in this bulletin, relate to requests received during the period from 1 January 2006 to 30 June 2006;

This difference is because review and appeal work for a single request can quite properly take several months to complete, particularly where the issues involved are complex and finely balanced. As a consequence, it would not be practical to collect these data for discrete quarterly time periods.

For the first time, this bulletin contains figures on the duration of deadline extensions to allow for consideration of the question of ‘public interest’. For similar reasons, these are also presented on a “year to date” basis.

8. This publication has been prepared jointly by the Economics and Statistics Division and the Information Rights Division of the Department for Constitutional Affairs.
9. Please note that press enquires on the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act in a particular government body should be addressed to **that body’s** Press Office.

General press enquiries on the contents of this bulletin should be directed **to Sandra Smith-Hughes** in DCA’s press office: **Tel: 020 7210 8692**

Other comments or queries on the Freedom of Information Act 2000 should be addressed to:

Information Rights Division
Department for Constitutional Affairs
6th Floor
Selborne House
54-60 Victoria Street
London
SW1E 6QW

Tel: 020 7210 8034

E-mail: **informationrights@dca.gsi.gov.uk**

Appendix A – Important note on the scope and consistency of the statistics

Defining the scope of Freedom of Information monitoring

Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoI) states that (subject to certain conditions):

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled—

(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and

(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him"

Regulation 5 of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 states that (subject to certain conditions):

"A public authority that holds environmental information shall make it available on request."

Following their introduction on 1 January 2005, the above provisions apply to all relevant requests for information made to public authorities, no matter how routine and straightforward they may be.

Government departments supply large amounts of information, both on request and proactively, as an established and routine part of their business. This includes information released in the form of leaflets, correspondence exchanges, reports and other published material, and through websites and departmental FoI Publication Schemes. All information released on request is covered by the Freedom of Information Act. However, it would be both uninformative and fundamentally unfeasible to count all such activity in departmental Freedom of Information monitoring returns.

The statistics in this bulletin therefore relate only to the **"non-routine" information requests** that government departments have received. Essentially, this means that departments' statistics should only count those requests where:

1. it was necessary to take a considered view on how to handle the request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, and
2. departmental Freedom of Information officer(s) were informed of the request and logged it in their case management systems.

Defining a request

The full definition of an "information request" for the purposes of inclusion in Department for Constitutional Affairs' (DCA) monitoring returns is shown below. This definition was circulated to members of the central government "Freedom of Information Practitioners' Group" in November 2004.

"[An information request for monitoring purposes is one ...]

1. Which meets the criteria in section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act and if the request falls under the Environmental Information Regulations it includes requests made in any form or context, including oral requests; ***and***
2. Which is a request for information that is not already reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means; ***and***
 - (i) Which results in the release of one or more documents (in any media) or inclusion of extracts of documents in the information released; ***or***
 - (ii) Results in information being withheld under an exemption or exception from the right of access (either the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations); ***or***
 - (iii) The request is not processed because the department estimates the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit in accordance with section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act; ***or***
 - (iv) The request is not processed because the department is relying on the provisions of section 14 of the Freedom of Information Act; ***or***
 - (v) Where a search is made for information sought in the request and it is found that none is held."

Consistency of the statistics

It is necessary to apply a definition of this sort in order to set a clear boundary to the coverage of our monitoring, and thereby obtain meaningful information from the process. The definition shown above has been widely disseminated to Freedom of Information officers in government and we have tried to ensure that it is applied consistently across all monitored bodies.

However, there is considerable variation in the way these bodies are structured and managed, and in the mechanisms that they have put in place to meet their obligations under the Freedom of Information Act. For example, some bodies operate a centralised Freedom of Information secretariat that co-ordinates responses to all information requests received. Others give a greater degree of autonomy to individual work areas in the handling of information requests.

As a result of these differences, **there is likely to be a degree of inconsistency** in the way in which bodies have interpreted and applied the definition of an "information request" for monitoring purposes. Although we cannot estimate the extent or effect of the likely inconsistency at this stage, it is very important to bear in mind when using the figures in this bulletin, particularly when comparing statistics for individual bodies.

In summary, it is important to note that:

- i) **These statistics only cover "non-routine" information requests, and do not give a representative picture of all requests for information received in government.**
- ii) **There is likely to be a degree of inconsistency between monitored bodies' interpretations of the definition of an "information request" for monitoring purposes. This should be borne in mind when using these statistics.**

Revisions to statistics on initial case outcomes by the Health and Safety Executive

Following a review of its FoI processes, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has changed the way it compiles statistics on case outcomes. Certain information requests received between Q3 of 2005 and Q1 of 2006 which were previously designated 'granted in full' have now been recategorized. The relevant figures in table C have been revised as a result.

It has not been possible to revise the HSE's Q1 and Q2 2005 statistics on a comparable basis with later quarters, and therefore table C does not show data for the HSE for these periods. We have recalculated the Q1 and Q2 2005 aggregate figures for central government and "other monitored bodies" using estimated outcomes data for the HSE.

Please note that this is solely a statistical change. There have been no changes to actual FoI disclosures, nor to disclosure policy, at the HSE.

The table below summarises the effect of these amendments to previously published statistics.

Summary of revisions to past published FoI outcome statistics

Table shows proportions of "resolvable" requests granted in full, calendar quarters up to Q1 2006

	Q1 2005: Jan-Mar	Q2 2005: Apr-June	Q3 2005: July-Sept	Q4 2005: Oct-Dec	Q1 2006: Jan-Mar
Health and Safety Executive					
Previous	54%	38%	84%	82%	88%
Amended	-	-	43%	45%	42%
Total for "other monitored bodies"					
Previous	64%	63%	72%	75%	76%
Amended	58%	63%	54%	56%	56%
Total for all monitored bodies					
Previous	56%	59%	67%	67%	68%
Amended	54%	59%	58%	58%	59%

Appendix B – Government bodies included in these statistics

The statistics in this bulletin have been derived from monitoring returns completed by Freedom of Information officers in government departments during early August 2006. The returns were collected and analysed by the Department for Constitutional Affairs, the government department with lead responsibility for the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The formal monitoring work covers a total of 42 government bodies, including all major departments of state (i.e. Ministerial departments).

The monitored bodies which are not departments of state nonetheless have significant policymaking, regulatory or information-handling functions. As far as possible, this list includes major non-Ministerial Government Departments (NMGDs) and excludes Executive Agencies, although these classifications are not mutually exclusive and ongoing "Machinery of Government" changes make it difficult to define the list precisely.

Coverage within the UK

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Office and the Wales Office are included in these statistics. However, we have not collected formal monitoring data from the National Assembly for Wales, or from the bodies that make up the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 applies in Scotland. This legislation lies outside the scope of the monitoring work on which this bulletin is based. However, the Scotland Office has been included here because, although it deals with matters relating to Scotland, it is based in England and hence falls under the scope of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 rather than the corresponding Scottish legislation.

A full list of the bodies covered by the monitoring is shown below.

Departments of State *(see Note 1 below)*

- Attorney General's Office
- Cabinet Office
- Department for Communities and Local Government
(includes the Deputy Prime Minister's Office)
- Department for Constitutional Affairs
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Department for Education and Skills
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department for International Development
- Department for Transport
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Department of Health
- Department of Trade and Industry
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- HM Treasury
- Home Office
- Ministry of Defence
- Northern Ireland Office

Privy Council Office
Scotland Office
Wales Office

Other monitored bodies

Central Office of Information
Charity Commission
Crown Prosecution Service
Debt Management Office
Export Credits Guarantee Department
Food Standards Agency
Health and Safety Executive and Commission
HM Land Registry
HM Revenue and Customs
National Archives
National Savings and Investments
Office for National Statistics
Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)
Office of Fair Trading
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)
Office of Rail Regulation
Office of Water Services (OFWAT)
Ordnance Survey
Royal Mint
Rural Payments Agency
Serious Fraud Office
Treasury Solicitor's Department

Notes

1. The following departmental changes have occurred since the full implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

The Inland Revenue and HM Customs and Excise formally merged from 1 April 2005 to form **HM Revenue and Customs**. The first statistical bulletin in this series (covering January – March 2005) reported separate statistics for the two predecessor departments.

The Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers was renamed as the **Attorney General's Office** from 2 June 2006. The new name will be used in this and all future bulletins in this series.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was superseded from 7 May 2006 by the **Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)**, which inherits the major part of its responsibilities. The Deputy Prime Minister no longer has responsibility for this Department. However, in the short term, FoI requests relating to the Deputy Prime Minister and his work continue to be administered and monitored by DCLG staff. In this bulletin, statistics for DCLG and the Deputy Prime Minister's office (DPMO) are therefore presented separately as follows:

All requests received by the ODPM prior to 7 May, and requests relating to the work of the DCLG since that date are counted under the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Requests relating to the Deputy Prime Minister received since 7 May are counted against the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO).

2. Cabinet Office figures include requests that were addressed to 10 Downing Street.

3. The figures provided by a number of Departments of State count the non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves. The departments and agencies affected are shown below.

Department for Constitutional Affairs

Figures include requests received by HM Court Service where they were referred to the department's Access Rights Unit.

Department for Transport

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

- Driving Standards Agency
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- Highways Agency
- Marine and Coastguard Agency
- Vehicle Certification Agency
- Vehicle and Operator Services Agency

Department for Work and Pensions

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

- Appeals Agency
- Child Support Agency
- Disability Carers Service
- Jobcentre plus
- Pension Service
- Rent Service

Department of Culture Media and Sport

Figures include requests received by the Royal Parks Agency

Home Office

From 2006 onwards, figures include requests received by the Criminal Records Bureau and the UK Passport Service. The latter agency was absorbed within the Identity and Passport Service from 1 April 2006. Previously-supplied figures for the year 2005 (as reported in tables A, B and C) only include requests received by the Home Office itself.

Ministry of Defence

Figures include requests received by the following agencies:

- ABRO (Army Base Repair Organisation) (Trading Fund)
- Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency
- Army Training and Recruiting Agency
- British Forces Post Office
- Defence Analytical Services Agency
- Defence Aviation Repair Agency (Trading Fund)
- Defence Bills Agency
- Defence Communications Services Agency
- Defence Estates
- Defence Medical Education and Training Agency
- Defence Procurement Agency
- Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Trading Fund)
- Defence Storage and Distribution Agency
- Defence Transport and Movements Agency

Defence Vetting Agency
Disposal Services Agency
Duke of York's Royal Military School
Met Office (Trading Fund)
Ministry of Defence Police and Guarding Agency
Naval Recruiting and Training Agency
Pay and Personnel Agency
RAF Training Group Defence Agency
Service Children's Education
UK Hydrographic Office (Trading Fund)
Veterans Agency

