

**Freedom of Information Act
2000 – Statistics on
implementation in central
government
Q4: October – December 2008**

Ministry of Justice
Statistics bulletin

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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 October to December 2008 and presents the latest quarterly set of statistics on their implementation within central government.

The previous quarterly bulletins, together covering the period from January 2005 to September 2008, are available via the links on the following pages of the Ministry of Justice and Freedom of Information websites:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/freedomofinformationquarterly.htm>

<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 43 central government bodies, including all major departments of state. **Appendix B** gives a full list of monitored bodies.

Executive summary

Departments of State reported receiving 4,818 “non-routine” information requests during the fourth quarter of 2008 (Q4). Other monitored bodies received 3,946 requests. Across all monitored bodies, a total of 8,764 requests were received, of which 90 per cent had been processed at the time of monitoring. This includes 144 requests handled under the amended Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) which came into force on 1 January 2005. *[see Table 1]*

The 8,764 requests across all monitored bodies received in the fourth quarter of 2008 is 12 per cent greater than the 7,804 received during the corresponding quarter of 2007. *[see Table A]*

During Q4 of 2008, 87 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 lower than in the previous quarter and in the corresponding quarter of 2007. *[see Table 2 and Table B]*

Of all “resolvable” requests received during Q4 of 2008 (i.e. requests where it was possible to make a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought), 57 per cent were granted in full, the same percentage as in the previous quarter. *[see Table 3 and Table C]*

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

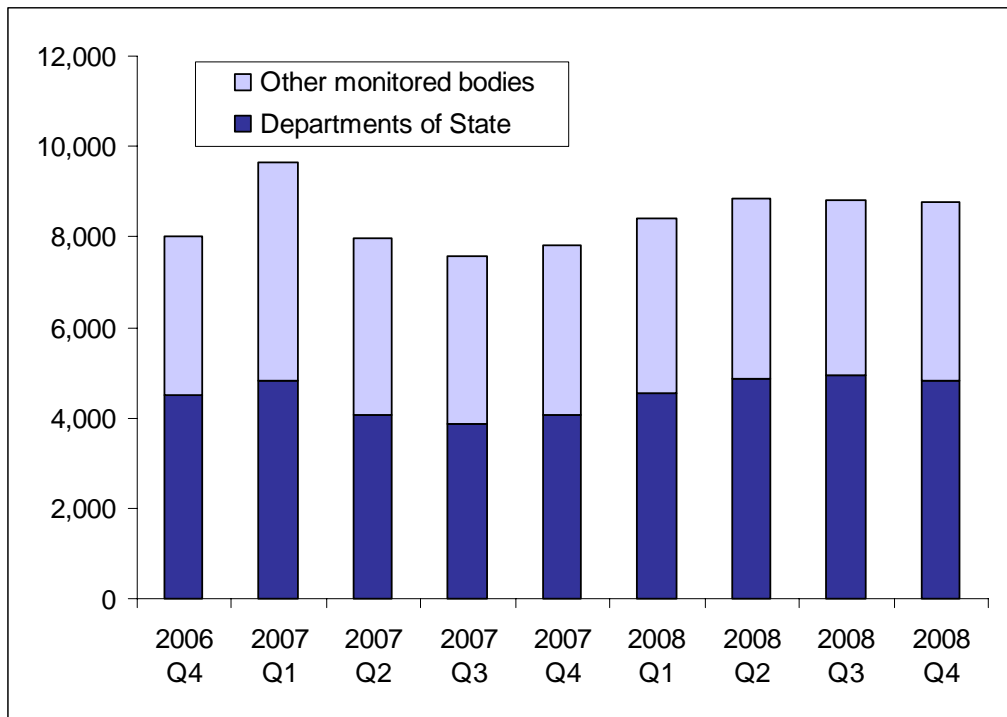
Commentary

Number of requests [see Table 1 and Table A]

Departments of State reported receiving a total of 4,818 information requests under the Freedom of Information Act and the associated Environmental Information Regulations during the quarter from 1 October to 31 December 2008 (Q4). Other monitored bodies reported having received 3,946 requests. Across all monitored bodies, therefore, a total of 8,764 requests were reported.

This overall total for Q4 of 2008 is 12 per cent greater than in the corresponding quarter last year (i.e. Q4 of 2007), and less than 1 per cent fewer than in the preceding quarter. The number of requests received by Departments of State was 18 per cent more than during the same period last year, while the total received by other monitored bodies increased by 6 per cent. Departments of State accounted for 55 per cent of all requests received by monitored bodies in Q4 of 2008.

Figure 1: Numbers of FoI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies, quarterly from Q4 2006



Of the Departments of State, the Ministry of Justice reported having received 670 requests during Q4, the highest departmental total. This was slightly more than the Ministry of Defence, whose total of 654 requests was the next highest. The Home Office (508), the Department for Work and Pensions (436) and the Department for Transport (423) were the other departments to receive more than 400 requests in Q4. It should be noted

that all these departments' figures include requests received by some of their agencies (see Appendix B).

Among other monitored bodies, the Health and Safety Executive reported having received 1,574 requests during Q4, while the National Archives received 950. The Health and Safety Executive is the only monitored body to have received more than 1,000 requests during each quarter since the Act was implemented.

Monitoring statistics also show the number of non-routine information requests that fell fully or mostly under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs). There were 144 such requests during the fourth quarter of 2008, accounting for 1.6 per cent of all requests received. The monitored bodies with the highest numbers of requests falling under the EIRs were Communities and Local Government with 30 requests, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs with 26 requests, and the Rural Payments Agency with 24 requests.

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

A large majority of requests (90 per cent) received during Q4 had been processed by the time monitoring information was collected. Of the 836 requests that were still being processed by the monitored bodies, 76 (9 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, 81 per cent of requests received during Q4 of 2008 were sent a response within this standard deadline. Some 87 per cent of requests received during Q4 were "in time", in that they either received a response within the standard deadline or were subject to a permitted deadline extension. Both of these measures are lower than in the equivalent quarter last year. Compared to the previous quarter (i.e. Q3 of 2008), both the proportion of requests sent a response within the standard and the proportion answered "in time" were marginally lower.

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.

Figure 2: Timeliness of responses to FOI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies in Q4 2008

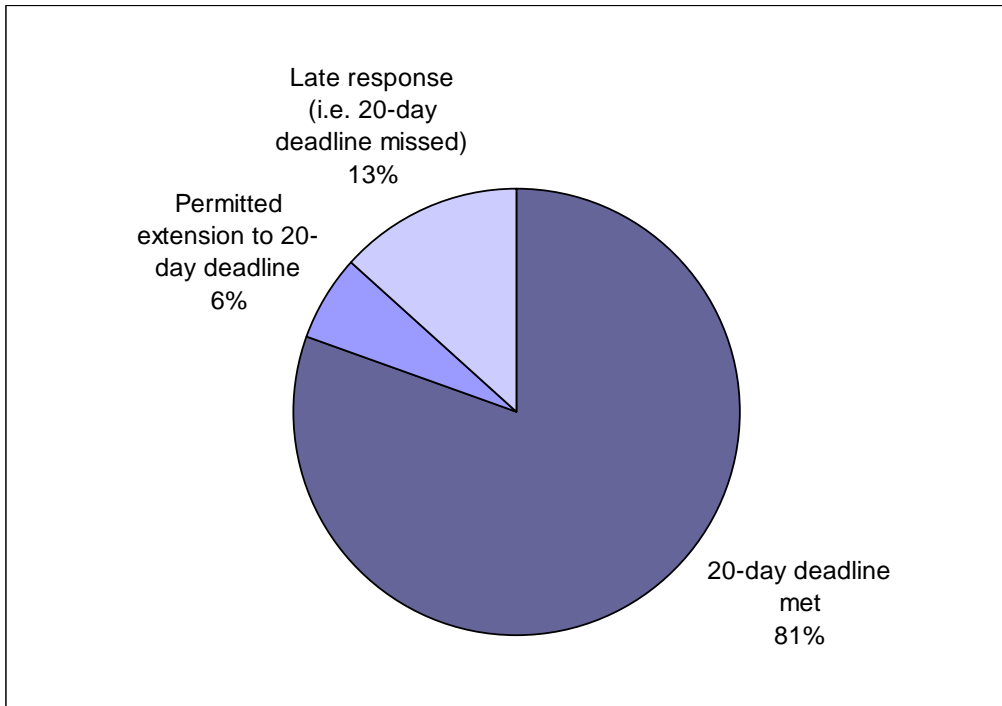
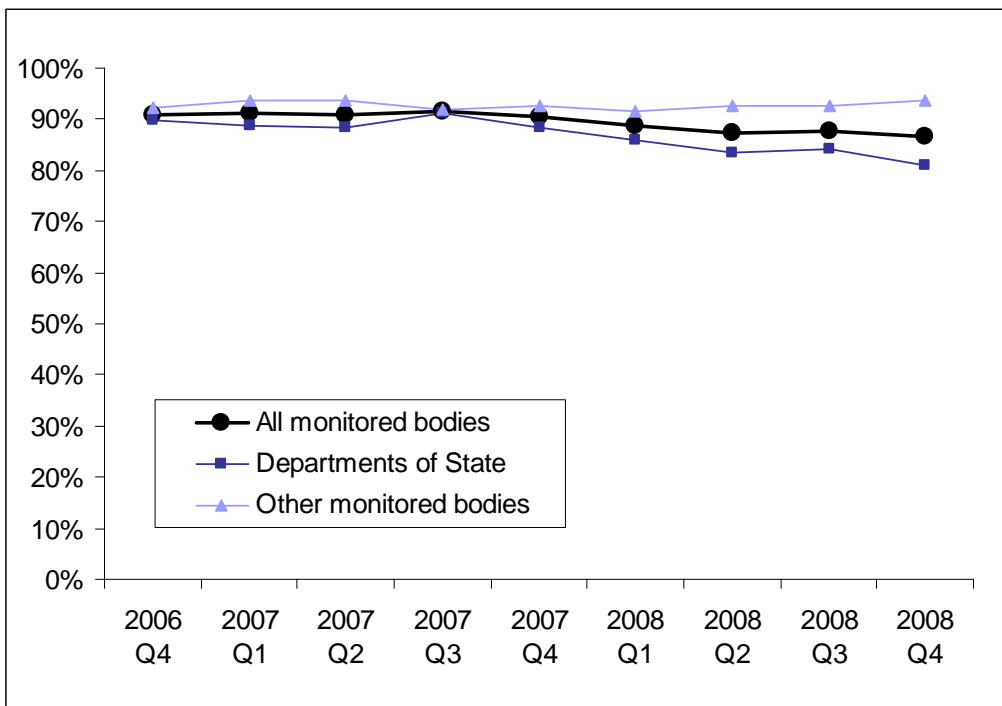


Figure 3: Percentage of FOI requests processed “in time” by Departments of State and other monitored bodies, quarterly from Q4 2006

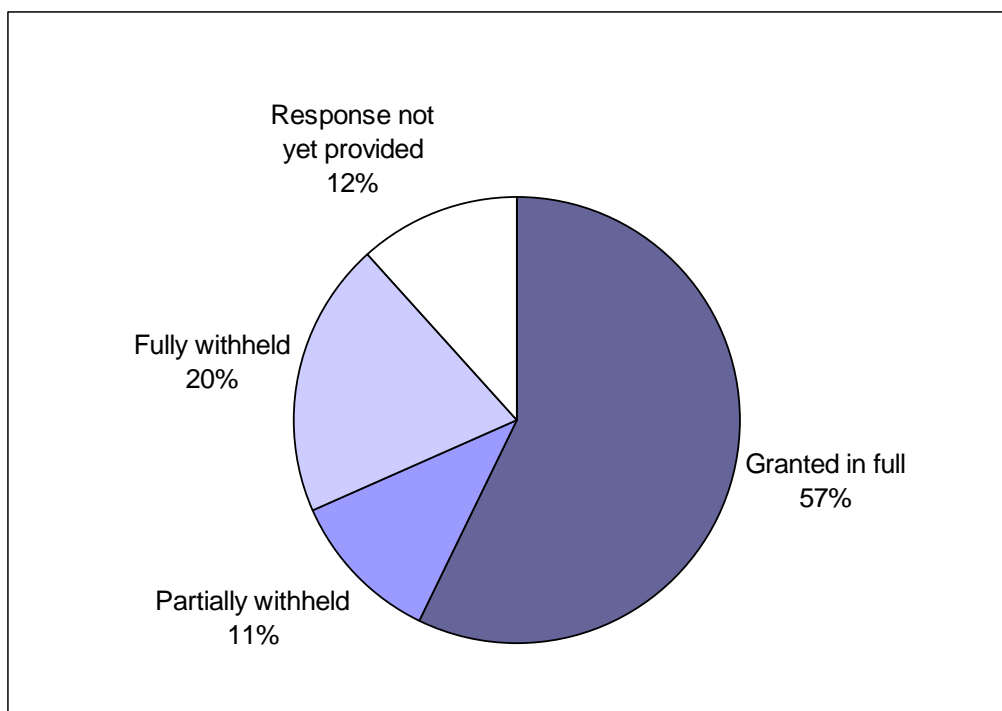


Initial outcomes of requests [see Table 3 and Table C]

Of the 8,764 requests reported during Q4 of 2008 across all monitored bodies, 76 were “on hold” awaiting a fee payment. In addition, a further 1,615 requests sought information that was not held, and 543 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 6,530 requests were assumed to be “resolvable”, in that it would have been possible to give a substantive decision on whether to release the information being sought.

Of the “resolvable” requests received during Q4, 57 per cent were granted in full, 11 per cent were withheld in part, and 20 per cent were withheld in full at the time of monitoring. The remaining 12 per cent had not yet received a substantive response.

Figure 4: Initial outcomes of “resolvable” FoI requests received by Departments of State and other monitored bodies in Q4 2008



The proportion of “resolvable” requests granted in full in Q4, 57 per cent, was the same as in the previous quarter. The proportion of requests in Q4 that were withheld in full were also the same as in the previous quarter, while the proportion of requests partially withheld was the slightly lower.

Use of exemptions and exceptions [see Table 4]

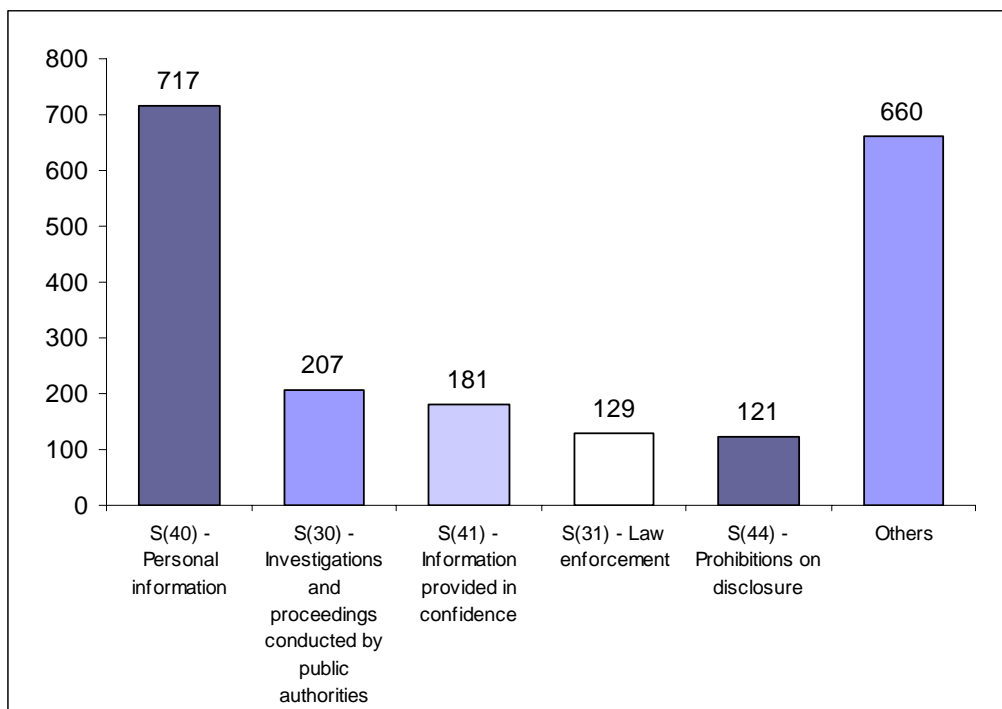
Under the FoI Act, a public authority can only refuse to provide requested information that it holds if:

- 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.

Across all monitored bodies, a total of 1,625 requests were reported as having one or more of these exemptions or exceptions applied to them during Q4. This quarterly total is markedly higher than it was prior to Q3 of 2006 because it now includes data on exemption usage by the Health and Safety Executive, which was not previously available.

Figure 5: Number of exemptions and exceptions applied by Departments of State and other monitored bodies on requests received in Q4 2008



The most commonly applied exemptions or exceptions in Q4 were those listed at Section 40 of the FoI Act (relating to personal information), which was applied to 717 requests, Section 30 (investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities), which was applied to 207 requests, and Section 41 (information provided in confidence), which was applied to 181 requests.

Departmental name changes

Please refer to note 1 in Appendix B for full details of departmental name changes that have occurred since Q4 2006, the period covered by the tables in this bulletin.

Tables

Latest quarterly tables

- Table 1. Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 October – 31 December 2008, and their status at time of monitoring
- Table 2. Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 October – 31 December 2008
- Table 3. Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 October – 31 December 2008
- Table 4. Exemptions and exceptions applied by monitored bodies when withholding non-routine information requests received from 1 October – 31 December 2008

In-year performance and volume tables

- Table A. Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 October 2006
- Table B. Proportion of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were answered “in time”, by quarter, since 1 October 2006
- Table C. Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 October 2006

TABLE 1

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 October - 31 December 2008, 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	8,764	7,928	76	760	144
TOTAL for Departments of State only	4,818	4,220	0	598	99
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,946	3,708	76	162	45
<i>Departments of State</i>					
Attorney General's Office	23	22	0	1	0
Cabinet Office	228	219	0	9	0
Communities and Local Government	174	167	0	7	30
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	195	153	0	42	1
Department for Children, Schools and Families	112	110	0	2	0
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	110	98	0	12	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	108	100	0	8	26
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	59	53	0	6	0
Department for International Development	71	71	0	0	0
Department for Transport #	423	403	0	20	17
Department for Work and Pensions #	436	420	0	16	0
Department of Energy and Climate Change ⁴	45	39	0	6	12
Department of Health	332	310	0	22	0
Export Credits Guarantee Department	20	20	0	0	3
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	210	177	0	33	0
HM Treasury	350	340	0	10	0
Home Office #	508	444	0	64	0
Ministry of Defence #	654	535	0	119	9
Ministry of Justice #	670	462	0	208	1
Northern Ireland Office	41	38	0	3	0
Scotland Office	31	22	0	9	0
Wales Office	18	17	0	1	0

TABLE 1 continued

Number of non-routine information requests received from 1 October - 31 December 2008, 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	
Other bodies included in monitoring					
Central Office of Information	10	9	0	1	0
Charity Commission	142	142	0	0	0
Crown Prosecution Service	111	111	0	0	0
Debt Management Office	92	92	0	0	0
Food Standards Agency	29	26	0	3	0
Health and Safety Executive	1,574	1,512	0	62	20
HM Land Registry	24	24	0	0	0
HM Revenue and Customs	316	308	0	8	0
National Archives	950	788	76	86	0
National Savings and Investments	11	11	0	0	0
Office for National Statistics	27	27	0	0	0
Office for Standards in Education	332	332	0	0	0
Office of Fair Trading	61	61	0	0	0
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	28	28	0	0	0
Office of Rail Regulation	50	50	0	0	0
Ordnance Survey	44	44	0	0	1
Royal Mint	4	4	0	0	0
Rural Payments Agency	38	36	0	2	24
Serious Fraud Office	27	27	0	0	0
Treasury Solicitor's Department	61	61	0	0	0
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	15	15	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 Ministry of Justice during February 2009.

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.

4 - In this and other tables, the Q4 figures for the Department of Energy and Climate Change relate to requests received between its creation on 3 October 2008 and 31 December 2008 (see Appendix B for more details).

TABLE 2

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 October - 31 December 2008

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	8,688	7,001	525	1,162	81%	87%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	4,818	3,568	342	908	74%	81%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,870	3,433	183	254	89%	93%
Departments of State						
Attorney General's Office	23	22	1	0	96%	100%
Cabinet Office	228	200	16	12	88%	95%
Communities and Local Government	174	151	9	14	87%	92%
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	195	127	23	45	65%	77%
Department for Children, Schools and Families	112	97	5	10	87%	91%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	110	89	18	3	81%	97%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	108	92	15	1	85%	99%
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	59	33	1	25	56%	58%
Department for International Development	71	62	8	1	87%	99%
Department for Transport #	423	384	4	35	91%	92%
Department for Work and Pensions #	436	321	4	111	74%	75%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	45	29	3	13	64%	71%
Department of Health	332	268	7	57	81%	83%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	20	19	0	1	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	210	146	52	12	70%	94%
HM Treasury	350	321	28	1	92%	100%
Home Office #	508	346	50	112	68%	78%
Ministry of Defence #	654	458	79	117	70%	82%
Ministry of Justice #	670	339	6	325	51%	51%
Northern Ireland Office	41	33	6	2	80%	95%
Scotland Office	31	17	4	10	55%	68%
Wales Office	18	14	3	1	*	*

TABLE 2 continued

Timeliness of response to non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 October - 31 December 2008

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	10	9	1	0	*	*
Charity Commission	142	135	0	7	95%	95%
Crown Prosecution Service	111	108	3	0	97%	100%
Debt Management Office	92	92	0	0	100%	100%
Food Standards Agency	29	24	5	0	83%	100%
Health and Safety Executive	1,574	1,384	55	135	88%	91%
HM Land Registry	24	21	0	3	88%	88%
HM Revenue and Customs	316	275	1	40	87%	87%
National Archives ^	874	728	108	38	83%	96%
National Savings and Investments	11	10	0	1	*	*
Office for National Statistics	27	25	1	1	93%	96%
Office for Standards in Education	332	319	0	13	96%	96%
Office of Fair Trading	61	60	0	1	98%	98%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	28	23	1	4	82%	86%
Office of Rail Regulation	50	46	3	1	92%	98%
Ordnance Survey	44	38	3	3	86%	93%
Royal Mint	4	3	0	1	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	38	30	2	6	79%	84%
Serious Fraud Office	27	27	0	0	100%	100%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	61	61	0	0	100%	100%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	15	15	0	0	*	*

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 Archives' 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 October - 31 December 2008

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	8,688	543	1,615	6,530	3,729	739	1,302	760	57%	20%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	4,818	312	867	3,639	2,012	314	715	598	55%	20%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,870	231	748	2,891	1,717	425	587	162	59%	20%
Departments of State										
Attorney General's Office	23	0	12	11	5	1	4	1	*	*
Cabinet Office	228	23	55	150	35	16	90	9	23%	60%
Communities and Local Government	174	0	33	141	110	12	12	7	78%	9%
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	195	8	25	162	40	42	38	42	25%	23%
Department for Children, Schools and Families	112	4	15	93	67	9	15	2	72%	16%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	110	13	19	78	44	11	11	12	56%	14%
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	108	18	13	77	58	8	3	8	75%	4%
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	59	3	8	48	36	1	5	6	75%	10%
Department for International Development	71	0	7	64	57	1	6	0	89%	9%
Department for Transport #	423	7	39	377	276	35	46	20	73%	12%
Department for Work and Pensions #	436	0	45	391	300	20	55	16	77%	14%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	45	1	13	31	12	10	3	6	39%	10%
Department of Health	332	0	74	258	167	31	38	22	65%	15%
Export Credits Guarantee Department	20	2	0	18	15	1	2	0	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	210	5	34	171	42	37	59	33	25%	35%
HM Treasury	350	66	90	194	93	11	80	10	48%	41%
Home Office #	508	66	116	326	152	30	80	64	47%	25%
Ministry of Defence #	654	9	108	537	316	24	78	119	59%	15%
Ministry of Justice #	670	85	141	444	148	8	80	208	33%	18%
Northern Ireland Office	41	0	12	29	14	6	6	3	48%	21%
Scotland Office	31	2	5	24	13	0	2	9	54%	8%
Wales Office	18	0	3	15	12	0	2	1	*	*

TABLE 3 continued
Initial outcomes of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies from 1 October - 31 December 2008

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	10	0	7	3	2	0	0	1	*	*
Charity Commission	142	12	14	116	70	23	23	0	60%	20%
Crown Prosecution Service	111	20	27	64	31	6	27	0	48%	42%
Debt Management Office	92	1	0	91	91	0	0	0	100%	0%
Food Standards Agency	29	0	2	27	5	10	9	3	19%	33%
Health and Safety Executive	1,574	47	465	1,062	583	210	207	62	55%	19%
HM Land Registry	24	0	3	21	20	0	1	0	95%	5%
HM Revenue and Customs	316	3	50	263	167	19	69	8	63%	26%
National Archives	874	91	72	711	457	51	117	86	64%	16%
National Savings and Investments	11	0	0	11	10	0	1	0	*	*
Office for National Statistics	27	0	7	20	13	4	3	0	*	*
Office for Standards in Education	332	0	72	260	125	64	71	0	48%	27%
Office of Fair Trading	61	10	2	49	10	6	33	0	20%	67%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	28	8	3	17	10	5	2	0	*	*
Office of Rail Regulation	50	13	5	32	22	3	7	0	69%	22%
Ordnance Survey	44	9	3	32	23	5	4	0	72%	13%
Royal Mint	4	0	0	4	3	1	0	0	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	38	5	4	29	21	1	5	2	72%	17%
Serious Fraud Office	27	9	2	16	10	2	4	0	*	*
Treasury Solicitor's Department	61	3	6	52	35	13	4	0	67%	8%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	15	0	4	11	9	2	0	0	*	*

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 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 details.

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-routine information requests received from 1 October - 31 December 2008

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	661	964	1,625
Number of requests where each exemption (listed in Part II of Fol Act²) was applied			
S(22) - Information intended for future publication	49	27	76
S(23) - Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters	22	3	25
S(24) - National security	24	0	24
S(26) - Defence	13	0	13
S(27) - International relations	52	4	56
S(28) - Relations within the United Kingdom	0	0	0
S(29) - The economy	14	1	15
S(30) - Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities	12	195	207
S(31) - Law enforcement	34	95	129
S(32) - Court records, etc	17	23	40
S(33) - Audit functions	0	9	9
S(34) - Parliamentary privilege	0	0	0
S(35) - Formulation of Government policy, etc	103	4	107
S(36) - Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs	25	5	30
S(37) - Communications with Her Majesty, etc and honours	22	0	22
S(38) - Health and Safety	15	48	63
S(39) - Environmental information	_3	_3	_3
S(40) - Personal information	260	457	717
S(41) - Information provided in confidence	65	116	181
S(42) - Legal professional privilege	31	19	50
S(43) - Commercial interests	79	21	100
S(44) - Prohibitions on disclosure	18	103	121
Number of requests where each exception (listed in Part 3 of EIRs) was applied			
3(a) - Exempt personal data	5	1	6
4(b) - Manifestly unreasonable	1	0	1
4(c) - Too general	0	0	0
4(d) - Work in progress / incomplete data	2	1	3
4(e) - Internal communications	10	0	10
5(a) - Adverse effect on international relations, defence, national security, public safety	2	1	3
5(b) - Adverse effect on course of justice or conduct of enquiries	0	1	1
5(c) - Adverse effect on intellectual property rights	0	0	0
5(d) - Impinges on confidentiality of a public authority's work	1	0	1
5(e) - Impinges on confidentiality of commercial or industrial information	2	1	3
5(f) - Adverse effect on interests of person who provided the information	2	0	2
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 include non-routine information requests received by one or more of their agencies, as well those received by the departments themselves.

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 fall 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 A

Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 October 2006

Government body	Total requests received								
	2006	2007				2008			
	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	7,999	9,644	7,988	7,580	7,804	8,429	8,865	8,825	8,764
TOTAL for Departments of State only	4,517	4,838	4,084	3,883	4,078	4,526	4,879	4,938	4,818
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	3,482	4,806	3,904	3,697	3,726	3,903	3,986	3,887	3,946
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	15	31	10	14	13	12	19	24	23
Cabinet Office	192	181	170	130	157	193	212	237	228
Communities and Local Government	157	137	119	154	136	150	191	183	174
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	-	-	-	114	142	135	184	223	195
Department for Children, Schools and Families	-	-	-	98	115	139	162	141	112
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	115	113	113	77	70	106	131	119	110
Department for Education and Skills	167	158	131	-	-	-	-	-	-
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	95	111	75	106	100	101	116	121	108
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	-	-	-	11	20	22	39	71	59
Department for International Development	56	49	41	47	53	67	101	60	71
Department for Transport #	417	483	440	482	473	538	518	485	423
Department for Work and Pensions #	384	366	308	260	325	298	368	367	436
Department of Energy and Climate Change	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45
Department of Health	320	408	311	310	260	329	343	345	332
Department of Trade and Industry	119	144	114	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deputy Prime Minister's Office	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Export Credits Guarantee Department	20	10	11	13	16	7	14	13	20
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	229	297	249	248	233	286	248	275	210
HM Treasury	353	316	267	241	268	293	447	324	350
Home Office #	785	920	512	417	420	470	510	509	508
Ministry of Defence #	816	790	830	667	739	718	635	685	654
Ministry of Justice #^	158	222	304	455	464	580	542	676	670
Northern Ireland Office	73	54	51	25	36	45	50	45	41
Privy Council Office	7	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scotland Office	17	25	14	8	28	19	38	23	31
Wales Office	19	18	13	6	10	18	11	12	18

TABLE A continued

Number of non-routine information requests received by monitored bodies, by quarter, since 1 October 2006

Government body	Total requests received								
	2006	2007				2008			
	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information	6	7	8	14	13	14	12	9	10
Charity Commission	63	84	120	79	106	125	114	128	142
Crown Prosecution Service	67	113	87	100	106	102	107	116	111
Debt Management Office	129	64	66	54	62	67	76	98	92
Food Standards Agency	41	42	24	26	24	31	27	20	29
Health and Safety Executive	1,282	1,542	1,355	1,531	1,471	1,584	1,742	1,559	1,574
HM Land Registry	12	12	17	12	27	17	29	25	24
HM Revenue and Customs	293	337	291	280	303	312	354	316	316
National Archives	1,101	1,939	1,376	1,026	1,064	1,004	823	1,002	950
National Savings and Investments	30	22	28	32	22	40	36	14	11
Office for National Statistics	23	50	33	31	34	24	17	30	27
Office for Standards in Education	152	200	191	188	227	240	259	225	332
Office of Fair Trading	48	97	64	96	68	66	86	82	61
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	46	45	45	39	28	46	41	31	28
Office of Rail Regulation	38	71	47	52	31	46	56	50	50
Ordnance Survey	16	26	32	27	36	33	53	53	44
Royal Mint	1	1	3	5	2	5	5	4	4
Rural Payments Agency	53	50	43	32	29	42	35	25	38
Serious Fraud Office	20	27	10	9	4	20	25	10	27
Treasury Solicitor's Department	45	68	48	51	52	79	66	69	61
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	16	9	16	13	17	6	23	21	15

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.

^ - Figures up to and including Q1 2007 are for the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

TABLE B

Proportion of non-routine information requests received that were answered "in time", by quarter, since 1 October 2006 (see footnote)

Government body	Proportion of requests answered "in time" (see footnote)								
	2006	2007				2008			
	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	91%	91%	91%	92%	90%	89%	87%	88%	87%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	90%	89%	88%	91%	88%	86%	83%	84%	81%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	92%	94%	94%	92%	93%	92%	92%	93%	93%
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	*	81%	*	*	*	*	*	92%	100%
Cabinet Office	93%	95%	98%	97%	97%	96%	92%	96%	95%
Communities and Local Government	85%	85%	85%	90%	90%	87%	92%	93%	92%
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	-	-	-	96%	92%	93%	88%	90%	77%
Department for Children, Schools and Families	-	-	-	91%	94%	94%	92%	92%	91%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	82%	76%	74%	79%	70%	82%	92%	95%	97%
Department for Education and Skills	91%	91%	92%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	92%	87%	81%	90%	88%	88%	80%	84%	99%
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	-	-	-	*	*	77%	64%	69%	58%
Department for International Development	73%	41%	93%	96%	81%	82%	92%	93%	99%
Department for Transport #	92%	90%	88%	92%	91%	90%	87%	88%	92%
Department for Work and Pensions #	88%	91%	88%	92%	79%	70%	56%	62%	75%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	71%
Department of Health	92%	93%	88%	93%	91%	93%	89%	91%	83%
Department of Trade and Industry	94%	95%	83%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deputy Prime Minister's Office	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	96%	98%	98%	98%	97%	98%	98%	99%	94%
HM Treasury	92%	97%	93%	94%	97%	99%	100%	99%	100%
Home Office #	90%	86%	88%	88%	88%	84%	83%	82%	78%
Ministry of Defence #	89%	87%	86%	89%	85%	86%	82%	86%	82%
Ministry of Justice #^	91%	86%	91%	90%	88%	71%	65%	63%	51%
Northern Ireland Office	69%	85%	98%	88%	83%	81%	84%	93%	95%
Privy Council Office	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scotland Office	*	84%	*	*	79%	*	89%	96%	68%
Wales Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

TABLE B continued

Proportion of non-routine information requests received that were answered "in time", by quarter, since 1 October 2006 (see footnote)

Government body	Proportion of requests answered "in time" (see footnote)								
	2006		2007			2008			
	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec	Q1: Jan-Mar	Q2: Apr-Jun	Q3: Jul-Sep	Q4: Oct-Dec
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Charity Commission	94%	98%	99%	96%	97%	90%	97%	98%	95%
Crown Prosecution Service	97%	100%	99%	100%	100%	99%	100%	97%	100%
Debt Management Office	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Food Standards Agency	95%	100%	96%	100%	100%	100%	100%	*	100%
Health and Safety Executive	89%	88%	90%	90%	91%	90%	92%	91%	91%
HM Land Registry	*	*	*	*	100%	*	97%	96%	88%
HM Revenue and Customs	80%	86%	81%	78%	71%	77%	77%	79%	87%
National Archives +	98%	98%	98%	95%	99%	96%	97%	95%	96%
National Savings and Investments	100%	95%	100%	100%	95%	100%	94%	*	*
Office for National Statistics	91%	88%	91%	90%	94%	96%	*	97%	96%
Office for Standards in Education	99%	98%	94%	95%	93%	95%	95%	96%	96%
Office of Fair Trading	88%	95%	91%	93%	97%	94%	97%	100%	98%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	100%	96%	96%	95%	93%	89%	100%	97%	86%
Office of Rail Regulation	100%	99%	98%	98%	97%	98%	96%	100%	98%
Ordnance Survey	*	92%	94%	85%	83%	88%	85%	83%	93%
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	81%	84%	88%	84%	79%	76%	77%	92%	84%
Serious Fraud Office	*	100%	*	*	*	*	92%	*	100%
Treasury Solicitor's Department	98%	100%	100%	100%	96%	99%	100%	99%	100%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	*	*	*	*	*	*	87%	100%	*

- 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.

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

^ - Figures up to and including Q1 2007 are for the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

+ - 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 non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 October 2006 (see footnote)

Government body	Proportion of requests granted in full								
	2006	2007				2008			
	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec
TOTAL for all monitored bodies	59%	63%	61%	58%	60%	58%	59%	57%	57%
TOTAL for Departments of State only	58%	58%	59%	57%	60%	57%	57%	56%	55%
TOTAL for other monitored bodies	61%	68%	63%	58%	60%	59%	61%	59%	59%
Departments of State									
Attorney General's Office	*	4%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Cabinet Office	33%	35%	35%	30%	29%	25%	25%	31%	23%
Communities and Local Government	69%	65%	71%	60%	61%	62%	57%	64%	78%
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform	-	-	-	42%	45%	40%	40%	39%	25%
Department for Children, Schools and Families	-	-	-	70%	68%	59%	76%	63%	72%
Department for Culture, Media and Sport #	40%	45%	45%	55%	47%	63%	55%	60%	56%
Department for Education and Skills	70%	66%	67%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	71%	79%	55%	46%	64%	66%	60%	65%	75%
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills	-	-	-	*	*	*	66%	62%	75%
Department for International Development	62%	56%	57%	51%	64%	63%	67%	72%	89%
Department for Transport #	74%	77%	74%	71%	67%	73%	71%	69%	73%
Department for Work and Pensions #	78%	82%	83%	83%	83%	73%	73%	68%	77%
Department of Energy and Climate Change	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	39%
Department of Health	75%	67%	65%	62%	63%	70%	74%	73%	65%
Department of Trade and Industry	35%	47%	39%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deputy Prime Minister's Office	*	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Export Credits Guarantee Department	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	17%	31%	26%	26%	34%	34%	31%	35%	25%
HM Treasury	40%	41%	21%	27%	35%	33%	46%	46%	48%
Home Office #	41%	40%	51%	58%	49%	46%	51%	44%	47%
Ministry of Defence #	70%	68%	68%	68%	73%	70%	66%	67%	59%
Ministry of Justice #^	43%	41%	41%	39%	45%	31%	33%	37%	33%
Northern Ireland Office	42%	28%	62%	*	46%	42%	41%	57%	48%
Privy Council Office	*	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Scotland Office	*	*	*	*	81%	*	42%	*	54%
Wales Office	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

TABLE C continued

Proportion of resolvable non-routine information requests received that were granted in full, by quarter, since 1 October 2006 (see footnote)

Government body	Proportion of requests granted in full								
	2006	2007				2008			
	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec	Q1: Jan–Mar	Q2: Apr–Jun	Q3: Jul–Sep	Q4: Oct–Dec
Other bodies included in monitoring									
Central Office of Information	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Charity Commission	37%	55%	53%	51%	61%	66%	44%	51%	60%
Crown Prosecution Service	52%	44%	59%	31%	26%	46%	36%	33%	48%
Debt Management Office	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Food Standards Agency	16%	34%	43%	48%	32%	45%	52%	*	19%
Health and Safety Executive	51%	52%	52%	48%	46%	49%	50%	54%	55%
HM Land Registry	*	*	*	*	100%	*	93%	96%	95%
HM Revenue and Customs	44%	43%	47%	47%	55%	50%	53%	56%	63%
National Archives	79%	89%	84%	78%	82%	77%	85%	67%	64%
National Savings and Investments	92%	*	91%	92%	*	92%	81%	*	*
Office for National Statistics	*	21%	48%	50%	57%	*	*	64%	*
Office for Standards in Education	42%	38%	44%	38%	45%	47%	60%	44%	48%
Office of Fair Trading	38%	45%	48%	42%	33%	25%	27%	17%	20%
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM)	82%	63%	52%	58%	*	64%	77%	*	*
Office of Rail Regulation	71%	88%	78%	62%	65%	83%	75%	68%	69%
Ordnance Survey	*	85%	65%	67%	78%	85%	80%	84%	72%
Royal Mint	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rural Payments Agency	68%	70%	41%	*	57%	57%	53%	*	72%
Serious Fraud Office	*	30%	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Treasury Solicitor's Department	88%	96%	100%	93%	94%	68%	74%	75%	67%
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

- 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.

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

^ - Figures up to and including Q1 2007 are for the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

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.

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 (Fol) 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 Fol 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 the Ministry of Justice’s 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 handing 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, 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.**

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 February 2009. This is the eighth set of quarterly Freedom of Information statistics to be published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the government department which now has lead responsibility for the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The first eight bulletins in this series were published by the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

The formal monitoring work covers a total of 43 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 periodic “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.

The following is a full list of the bodies covered by the monitoring statistics in the fourth quarter of 2008.

Departments of State

- Attorney General’s Office
- Cabinet Office
- Communities and Local Government
- Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
- Department for Children, Schools and Families

Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
Department for International Development
Department for Transport
Department for Work and Pensions
Department of Energy and Climate Change
Department of Health
Export Credits Guarantee Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
HM Treasury
Home Office
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Justice
Northern Ireland Office
Scotland Office
Wales Office

Other monitored bodies

Central Office of Information
Charity Commission
Crown Prosecution Service
Debt Management Office
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
Ordnance Survey
Royal Mint
Rural Payments Agency
Serious Fraud Office
Treasury Solicitor's Department
Water Services Regulation Authority (OFWAT)

Notes

1. The following departmental changes occurred between the beginning of October 2006 and the end of December 2008, the period covered by the in-year performance and volume tables (Tables A, B and C) in this bulletin.

On 2 April 2007, the functions of the **Privy Council Office (PCO)** were split between the Cabinet Office and the Department for Constitutional Affairs (now the Ministry of Justice). No separate monitoring statistics have therefore been collected for the PCO from Q2 of 2007 onwards.

On 9 May 2007, the **Ministry of Justice (MoJ)** was created, assuming the responsibilities of the former Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA), as well as the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the Office for Criminal Justice Reform (OCJR) from the Home Office. The statistics for MoJ comprise information requests received by the DCA prior to 9 May 2007 and requests received by all parts of MoJ since that date. Information requests received by NOMS and OCJR prior to the transfer of responsibilities on 9 May 2007 have been counted under the Home Office, of which they were a part at the time the request was initially received.

Requests relating to the Deputy Prime Minister received up to 28 June 2007 are counted against the **Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO)**, which was abolished on that date.

Three new departments of state were created on 28 June 2007. These were the **Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)**, the **Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS)**, and the **Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR)**. They replaced the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). In the Q2 2007 statistics, information requests received by DCSF and DIUS on 28 and 29 June 2007, the last two working days of the quarter, were counted under the figures for DfES. Requests to BERR on these last two days of Q2 2007 were counted under the figures for DTI. The three new departments have been separately identified in the statistics since Q3 2007.

The **Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)** was created on 3 October 2008, bringing together responsibilities previously held by BERR and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The Q4 2008 figures for DECC relate to information requests received by the department between 3 October 2008 and 31 December 2008. Information requests relating to these responsibilities received on 1 and 2 October are counted under BERR or Defra as appropriate.

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 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 for 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, the Borders and Immigration Agency, 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 only included 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

Ministry of Justice

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

Explanatory 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 (Fol Act) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs). They are collected and published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), with assistance from Freedom of Information officers across central government.
2. The Fol 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 MoJ is the lead department responsible for the Fol Act. Further information is available at:

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

3. The (amended) EIRs also came into force on 1 January 2005, to coincide with the Fol 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 MoJ in February 2009. They relate to information requests received during the period 1 October to 31 December 2008. The collection of monitoring data began on the 21st working day after the last day of this period (i.e. on 2 February 2009), since 20 working days is the statutory deadline for public authorities to respond to information requests under both the Fol Act and the EIRs.
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 43 central government bodies. At the commencement of the Act in January 2005 there were also 43 bodies covered by the monitoring statistics, but the precise number can change from time to time due to “Machinery of Government” changes. A full list of the monitored bodies in Q4 2008 is shown in **Appendix B**.

7. This is the sixteenth quarterly statistical bulletin on the implementation of the Fol Act. This publication has been prepared jointly by the Constitution and Access to Justice Analysis Division and the Information Directorate of the Ministry of Justice.

Symbols and conventions

The following symbols have been used throughout the tables in this bulletin:

- = Not applicable
0 = Nil

Contact points for further information

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.

Press enquiries on the contents of this bulletin should be directed to the Ministry of Justice press office:

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Other enquiries about these statistics or queries on the Freedom of Information Act 2000 should be directed to:

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General enquiries about the statistical work of the Ministry of Justice can be e-mailed to: statistics.enquiries@justice.gsi.gov.uk

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