



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Please note the text of this request has been reproduced exactly as received.

FOI Reference number: 13/2022

Date: 26 April 2022

Request: Freedom of Information request - Impact of Covid-19 on FOI responsiveness

1. For the period 16th March – 17th July 2020 (i.e., when ICO had indicated a sympathetic approach to delay), provide precise data if available e.g., 15 out of 30 requests, and if not, provide an estimate e.g., 10%, for these questions:

(a) how many responses to FOI requests were issued within 20 working days of receipt by your organisation?

Answer - 4 out of 17 requests received between 16th March – 17th July 2020

(b) how many responses to FOI review requests were issued within 20 working days of receipt of the request for an internal review?

Answer - None received between 16th March – 17th July 2020

(c) how many responses to FOI requests were issued within 21 and 60 working days of receipt by your organisation?

Answer - 9 out of 17 requests received between 16th – 17th July 2020

(d) how many responses to FOI review requests were issued within 21 and 60 working days of receipt of the request for an internal review?

Answer - None received between 16th March – 17th July 2020

2. For the period 18th July – 8th October 2020 (i.e., during the 'preparing for recovery' phase), provide precise data if available e.g., 15 out of 30 requests, and if not, provide an estimate e.g., 10%, for these questions:

(a) how many responses to FOI requests were issued within 20 working days of receipt by your organisation?

Answer - 2 out of 10 requests received between 18th July – 8th October 2020

- (b) how many responses to FOI review requests were issued within 20 working days of receipt of the request for an internal review?

Answer - None received between 18th July – 8th October 2020

- (c) how many responses to FOI requests were issued within 21 and 60 working days of receipt by your organisation?

Answer - 2 out of 10 requests received between 18th July – 8th October 2020

- (d) how many responses to FOI review requests were issued within 21 and 60 working days of receipt of the request for an internal review?

Answer - None received between 18th July – 8th October 2020

3. During the period 1st March to 30th October 2020, provide precise data if available e.g., 15 out of 30 requests, and if not, provide an estimate e.g., 10%, for these questions:

- (a) how many responses to FOI requests were issued more than 60 working days after receipt of the request?

Answer - 12 out of 33 requests received between 1st March to 30th October 2020

- (b) how many responses to FOI review requests were issued more than 60 working days after receipt of a request for an internal review?

Answer - None received between 1st March to 30th October 2020

4. When FOI request or review responses were issued more than 21 working days after receipt during the period 1st March and 30th October 2020, what were the main reasons for the delay? e.g., closure of premises due to Covid-19, reallocation of resources due to Covid-19, staff shortages due to Covid-19, absence of key staff due to Covid-19, limited access to necessary systems due to Covid-19, other issue related/unrelated to Covid19.

Answer -
Closure of premises due to Covid-19
Staff Shortages due to Covid-19
Absence of key staff due to Covid-19
Limited access to necessary systems due to Covid-19
Priority given to recovery of business services arising from Covid-19

5. In relation to the FOI requests received by your organisation between 1st March and 30th October 2020, what proportion related directly to Covid-19, your organisation's Covid-19 response or impact of the pandemic on your organisation? (Provide precise data if available e.g., 15 out of 30 requests, and if not, provide an estimate e.g., 10%)

Answer –

1 out of 33 requests received between 1st March to 30th October 2020 related to our organisation's Covid-19 response.

1 out of 33 requests received between 1st March to 30th October 2020 related to the impact of the pandemic on our organisation.

6. On 17th July 2020 the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) launched a self-assessment Freedom of Information toolkit (FOI self-assessment toolkit | ICO) to help public authorities respond to FOI requests as they prepared to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.
- Does, or has your organisation ever, use/d the toolkit? If so, please explain whether it has had any positive outcomes.
 - If your organisation has not/does not make use of the toolkit, please explain why not.

Answer – The NI Policing Board has not used this toolkit. The number of FOI requests received by the organisation is monitored on an ongoing basis with regular reports to senior management.

7. In response to Covid19, has the volume of information your organisation publishes:
- not changed, significantly increased, significantly decreased or don't know.

Answer – Not changed

8. Has your organisation taken steps to proactively publish information relating to Covid-19, your organisation's Covid-19 response or the impact of the pandemic on your organisation? If it includes a dedicated webpage, please provide a link to the webpage.

Answer – Information relating to the delivery of the Board's work and services was published online when appropriate to do so. This information has now been removed.

Details of activity taken in respect of Business Continuity as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic can be found in the Board's Annual Report:

<https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/publication/annual-report-and-accounts-2020-2021>

If you have queries about this request or the decision please contact the Board quoting the reference number above. If you are unhappy with the service you have received and wish to make a complaint or request a review you should write to the Board's Chief Executive at the following address:

Northern Ireland Policing Board
Waterside Tower
31 Clarendon Road
Clarendon Dock
Belfast BT1 3BG

Email: foi@nipolicingboard.org.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner. Generally, the Information Commissioner's Office cannot investigate or make a decision on a case unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Board. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:-

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF

Telephone: - 0303 1231114
Email: - ni@ico.org.uk

Please be advised that Policing Board replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.nipolicingboard.org.uk.

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.