

11 October 2024

IC-331636-B5Q7

Request

You asked us:

Please can I request the following.

- 1. Number of FOIs received between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.*
- 2. Number of which a clarification was requested by ICO.*
- 3. The number of working days it took ICO to request the initial clarification for these requests.*

We received your request on 14 September 2024.

You later clarified Part 1. of your request on 21 September 2024 to confirm that you were referring to the number of FOI information requests received.

We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOIA).

Our response

We hold information that falls under the scope of your request. However, we are refusing the request because to locate the information requested in entirety would exceed the cost limit set out by section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

This is due to Parts 2 and 3 of your request where we do not hold the information in a format that can be simply extracted via an automated system report.

Information in relation to your remaining point is already available on our website, and details about this can be found under the **Advice and assistance** section below.

Section 12(2) of the FOIA states that a public authority is not obliged to confirm or deny if requested information is held if the estimated cost of establishing this would exceed the appropriate cost limit. The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 stipulates that the 'appropriate limit' for the ICO is £450. We have determined that £450 would equate to 18 hours work.

To obtain the information you are requesting, in respect of Points 2 and 3, it would be necessary to manually extract that information by checking every FOIA information request received during the specified time frame.

Assuming that each search would take approximately two minutes to complete – and it is certain that some searches would take much longer than that – this would equate to over 43 hours' worth of searching. The time taken to search would undoubtedly be longer than the estimated 43 hours if we were to also include those Hybrid request cases received that involve an FOIA element.

We have therefore concluded that the amount of time required to conduct these searches would likely far exceed the 18 hours which would accrue a charge of £450 or less, triggering the provisions of section 12 of the FOIA.

On this basis, we are refusing your request.

Advice and assistance

We have considered if the request could be refined to bring it within the cost limit with particular regard to Points 2 and 3.

However, as the information sought is specific, and not easy to refine further, a manual search of the requests received would still be necessitated and be likely to incur the same level of costs outlined above - even if the two points within the request were to be handled separately.

In addition, consideration would also have to be given to whether the value to the public of any resulting information is proportionate to the effort to locate it. As the accuracy of lengthy manual searches could not be guaranteed, we would need to consider if it is in the public interest for us to dedicate the resources necessary to carry out this kind of manual search, or whether it would represent an unreasonable burden on us as a public authority.

Turning to Part 1 of your request, we already publish information that will provide you with the information sought [here](#)

The relevant section is "Requests for our information".

Please be aware, if you were to refine your request to ask for this information only, it would be exempt in accordance with Section 21 of the FOIA as the information is already accessible to you.

For your information, we would like to advise you that work is currently ongoing to enhance the scope of our information reporting capability with the intention of being able to more easily provide information similar in nature to that requested within the not too distant future.

This concludes our response to your request.

Next steps

You can ask us to review our response. Please let us know in writing if you want us to carry out a review. Please do so within 40 working days.

You can read a copy of our full [review procedure](#) on our website.

If we perform a review but you are still dissatisfied, you can complain to the ICO as regulator of the FOIA. This complaint will be handled just like a complaint made to the ICO about any other public authority.

You can [raise a complaint](#) through our website.

Your information

Our [privacy notice](#) explains what we do with the personal data you provide to us, and sets out [your rights](#). Our [Retention and Disposal Policy](#) details how long we keep information.

Yours sincerely



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