

# **Freedom of Information Data and Insights**

**Financial Year 2023-2024**

## Background

All Freedom of Information requests must be received in writing and Haringey has a dedicated online form and email address for this. In line with best practice, Haringey publishes data and information online and has a [disclosure log](#), which shows all requests received and responses issued. In addition, a full performance report is published [online](#).

Haringey Council currently processes Freedom of Information enquiries through its Feedback and Resolutions function, processing enquiries through a case management system (*Respond*). This system collects and processes certain types of data which allow the organisation to monitor its performance in relation to FOIs and EIR requests.

The ICO asks the council to provide certain kinds of data to demonstrate performance and responses to FOIs and EIR requests. This data is shown in **Tables F to I** in the appendix. This data is broken down by quarter and includes how many requests were received and closed in these given periods, the proportion that were responded to on time, the proportion of cases where information was withheld, and the exemptions applied where information was not supplied.

There are some gaps in these tables, which are metrics that are not currently reportable on *Respond*. This includes the number of open and overdue cases as captured at a specific point in time. Whilst *Respond* does not allow us to retrieve open and overdue data historically, Haringey is in the process of replacing its case management system with a new solution, and reviewing the data and reporting capabilities of the system is a key part of the replacement process. We aim to use this replacement process to improve our compliance with ICO data and reporting requirements.

There are some other notes on this data. These include that *Respond* logs all FOI and EIR requests in a single category (FOI/EIR Request), meaning that we cannot separately report on the number of FOI and EIR requests received respectively. The total number of requests is listed under 'Total Requests Received' in Table F.

Haringey is no longer using the 'partially upheld' designation for complaints and for Internal Reviews, which means that this will no longer be a reportable statistic in *Respond*. *Respond* also cannot, for example, designate where information is withheld under the different sections of an exemption, so each exemption is reported as a single figure. Additionally, Haringey sees a very low number of FOI requests which are given permitted extensions or stopped clocks for complexity or clarification, and we cannot draw down data on this specifically, so these figures are not included here. Haringey also does not offer a stopped clock for fees notices, so this figure is reported as zero.

The past several years have seen a decline in our performance when it comes to responding to FOI and EIR requests. This is evidenced below in **Table A**. This has been recognised internally for some time. We have a genuine commitment at the highest levels of the council to improve this performance. Performance data is reviewed at our Council Leadership Team (Chaired by our CEO) every quarter and a session of our Leadership Team (all Heads of Service, Assistant Directors and Directors) in July was dedicated to FOI – our responsibilities and performance.

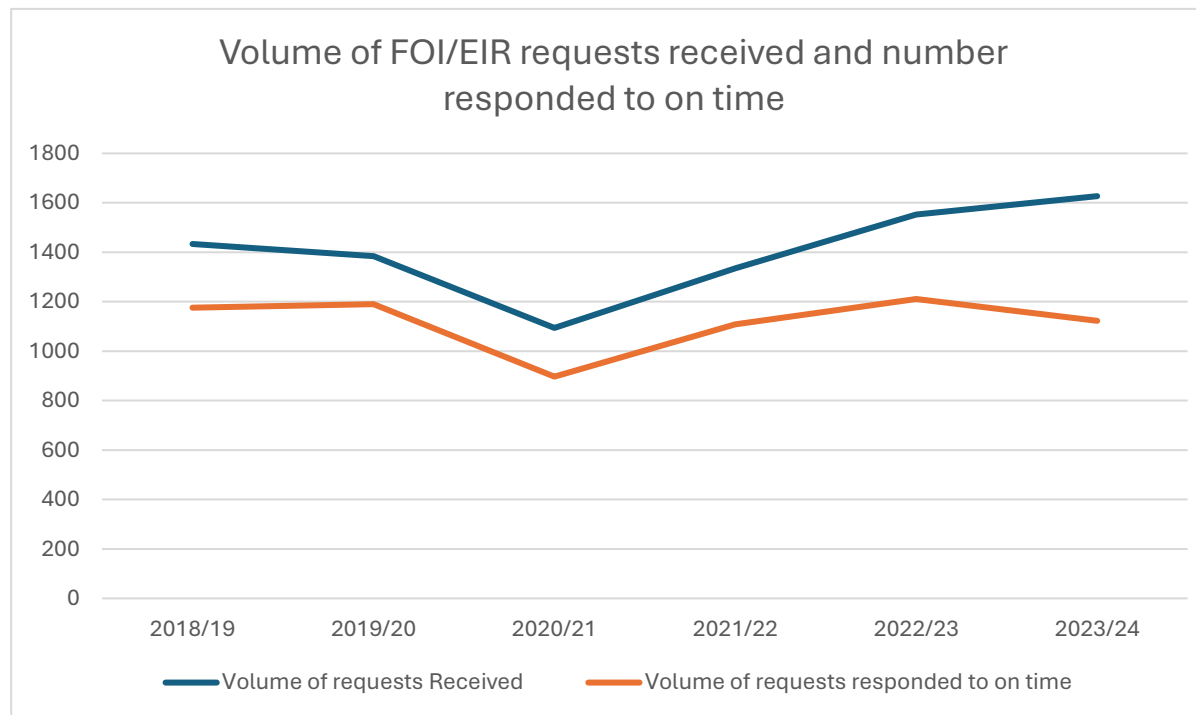
In order to improve and maintain our performance regarding FOI and EIR requests, the organisation has agreed to take a number of actions which have been developed into an action plan relating to the processing of FOI requests. The implementation of these actions has already started, and will continue over the coming months. We would also welcome any advice or support the ICO may be able to provide to inform our improvement journey.

Desired Outcome	Actions	Timeline	Responsible Team/Officer
Ensuring corporate prominence to FOI and EIR requests, and raising awareness of the need for compliance.	<p>Reviewing data quarterly at Council leadership Team.</p> <p>Using dedicated communications, e.g. Feedback Forum and Leadership Network, to remind colleagues of the importance of compliance.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Next data update at CLT: 15/10/2024</p> <p>Focus on FOI at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership Network: 31/07/2024</li> <li>• Upcoming Feedback Forum: 10/12/2024</li> </ul>	Feedback and Resolutions Management Team
Learning from other local authorities with high rates of compliance with FOI and EIR requests.	Contacting peers in other local authorities to understand how they maintain compliance in a time of stretched capacity.	Meeting held with FOI lead at Camden Council in September 2024. Further meetings to follow.	Feedback and Resolutions Management Team
Self-assessing and learning from current performance.	Internal FOI audit and report	Completed	Feedback and Resolutions Management Team

	Implementing learnings identified in audit report.	On-going	
A skilled workforce that strives to continuously improve FOI and EIR compliance.	<p>Training for the corporate feedback team (who administer process) to improve and streamline the FOI/EIR processing process and improve advice.</p> <p>Training for responding officers across the council being developed.</p>	First round completed. Will be regular on-going	Feedback and Resolutions Management Team
Cleared FOI/EIR backlogs	Targeted support offered to services with the largest backlogs	Trialled with housing services, with plans to roll out across the organisation.	Feedback and Resolutions Management Team

## Whole Year Performance

Between April 2023 and March 2024 Haringey responded to 1,627 requests, an increase of 74 (16%) on the previous year. 69% of responses were sent within 20 days, which represents a significant decrease where this rate had previously been very stable relative to the volume of requests received, shown in the graph below. A table showing the performance across the past six years is at **Table A** in the appendix.



The above graph shows the volume of FOI and EIR requests received over the last six financial years, and the proportion of those that were responded to within the statutory timeframe. The dip in performance in 2023/24 is represented by the divergence in these figures in the 2023/24 period. However, the graph also shows a decrease in requests in 2020/21, which it's possible was a result of

the COVID-19 pandemic, and a subsequent increase in number of requests to above pre-pandemic levels, which may have contributed to decreased performance in the 2023/24 period.

There are a number of factors which contributed to increased volumes in recent years including the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, which drove a surge in FOI and EIR requests and challenges in our landlord function which was insourced back to the council from our ALMO. In both cases the capacity of the relevant team to respond to FOIs (along with complaints and other types of feedback) were significantly stretched. Intensive work is now taking place to support Haringey's housing services to respond to FOI requests more quickly as part of their wider improvement journey.

Within the council we also recognise that there are other particular services that affect the overall compliance rate. We have also begun to provide targeted support to these service areas to drive down backlogs. This is an approach which we are going to adopt more broadly across the organisation.

It is also important to note here that as we work intensively on closing overdue FOI and EIR requests, performance metrics decline, as requests are only recorded as 'late' when they are closed. This will therefore continue to have an impact on performance figures as we work on closing overdue requests.

There is provision under the FOI Act for not providing information in instances where either the information is not held, or we are unable to gather the information due to the cost associated. In 2023-24, 223 data requests were not provided for these reasons, which is an increase of 20 on the previous year. The breakdown of volumes and percentages relating to these requests is shown in **Table B**.

In addition to those requests, there were a further 130 cases (8% of the total received) where an exemption was applied. Both the FOI and EIR Acts contain exemptions that allow Public Authorities to withhold information under specific circumstances, and are detailed in **Table C**. The most frequently applied exemption (49% of all exemptions) was under Section 40 of the Act and relates to *protecting personal information*.

Of the 1,627 FOI requests that were submitted to the council in 2023-24, Direct Services in our Environment and Resident Experience directorate [this includes parking and highways] received the majority for a single service area with 360 FOI requests (22% of all FOIs). This represents an increase on the previous year (203 requests, or 13% of all FOIs).

All other council services received comparatively lower volumes across the year. The highest volume received by each service area is shown in **Table D**.

### Internal Reviews

If residents are not satisfied with the response to their Freedom of Information requests, they can request an internal review. This review is undertaken by a senior officer who was not involved in the preparation of the original response. The review seeks to assess the quality of the handling of the request, and the information that has been provided in the response.

In 2023-24, out of 1,627 FOI requests, only 44 (3%) were referred to the Internal Review stage. Of these 44, only 10 cases (23%) were upheld or partly upheld, meaning that insufficient information had been provided in the first instance, or information had been denied erroneously.

In 2022-23, we received the same number of Internal Review requests, but 14 (32%) were upheld or partially upheld. However, this does represent a significant decrease on 2021/22, where 63 cases were escalated to Internal Review, and 32 (51%) were upheld.

A breakdown of Internal Reviews by service is shown in **Table E**.

### Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO)

In 2023/24, two FOI cases were referred to the ICO. Of these, one decision was in the council’s favour, and one decision was made against the council, determining that the requested data should be shared.

### Appendix: Data Tables

Table A – FOI/EIR annual performance

Year	No. of requests	% on time
2023 - 2024	1,627	69%
2022 - 2023	1,553	78%

2021-2022	1,335	83%
2020-2021	1,094	82%
2019-2020	1,384	86%
2018-2019	1,434	82%

Table B – FOI information not provided

<b>Information not Provided</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Total requests</b>
Information not held	189	12%
Information not given due to cost	34	2%

Table C – FOI/EIR exemptions applied

<b>FOI - Exemption Applied</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Total Exemptions</b>
Section 40 – Personal Information	64	49%
Section 31 – Law Enforcement	24	18%
Section 43 – Commercial Interests	15	11%
Section 21 - Info accessible by some other means	6	5%



Section 22 - Intended for future publication	5	4%
Section 24 – Safeguarding of National Security	1	0.8%
Section 41 – Confidential Information	5	4%
Section 42 – Legal professional Privilege	0	0%
Section 36 - Effective Conduct of Public Affairs	1	0.8%
Section 38 - safety of any individual	0	0%
<b>EIR - Exemption Applied</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Total Exemptions</b>
Regulation 12 5 (b)	1	0.8%
Regulation 12 (4) b) – Manifestly Unreasonable	2	2%
Regulation 12 (4) (a) – Information not held	6	5%

Table D – Top 5 FOI requests received by Service

<b>Service</b>	<b>No. of FOI</b>	<b>% of total</b>
E&RE - Direct Services	360	22%
E&RE – Stronger and Safer Communities	191	12%

Corporate and Customer Services	127	8%
Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability	125	8%
Housing Demand	89	5%

Table E – Internal Reviews by Service

<b>Service</b>	<b>No. of IRs</b>	<b>% Upheld/Partly Upheld</b>
E&RE - Direct Services	11	18%
Strategy, Communications and Collaboration	4	25%
Corporate and Customer Services	6	16%
Housing Services and Building Safety	6	50%
Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability	3	0%
Other	14	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>23%</b>

Table F – Data requested by the ICO

<b>Name of organisation:</b>	London Borough of Haringey
<b>Date of most recent data collection:</b>	23/09/2024

Data to collect	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Total requests received	485	529	449	595
Total open requests	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Total of open requests with permitted extensions – public interest test	0	0	0	0
Total of open requests with permitted extensions – complex and voluminous	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Total requests closed	376	446	341	465
Total requests closed within statutory timescale	255	320	227	311
Total requests closed with a permitted extension	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Total requests closed outside statutory timescale	121	124	112	152

Total closed requests where information was granted in full	302	335	277	362
Total closed requests where information was withheld in full	80	113	64	103
Total closed requests where information was partially provided	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Total internal reviews received	8	19	8	14
Total requests with a stopped clock for clarification	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Total requests with a paused clock for fees notice	0	0	0	0

Table G

Data to Collect	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Compliance rate	68%	72%	67%	67%
Total FOI requests received	1781	2360	2139	2681
Total EIR requests received	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Total of overdue requests	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Total of overdue requests over one month old	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Total of overdue requests over three months old	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Total of overdue requests over six months old	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Total of overdue requests over nine months old	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Total of overdue requests over one year old	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Exemptions and exceptions applied	See Exemptions and exceptions tab, please use the additional tables provided			
Total closed requests where information was withheld under the provision at section 12	4	18	5	7
Total closed requests where information was withheld under the provision at section 14	0	0	3	0

Total internal reviews closed	4	20	10	10
Total internal reviews closed within code of practice and statutory timescales	3	7	8	8
Total internal reviews closed outside code of practice and statutory timescales	1	13	1	2
Total internal reviews closed and fully upheld	0	6	1	2
Total internal reviews closed and partially upheld	0	0	1	0
Total internal reviews closed and overturned	1	8	4	8
Total internal reviews open	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available

Tables H and I

Exemption	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Section 21 - Information accessible by other means	1	4	1	1
Section 22 - Information Intended for Future Publication	1	3	0	1
Section 22A - Research Information	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
Section 23 - National Security (Security Bodies)	0	0	0	0
Section 24 - National Security	0	0	0	1
Section 26 - Defence	0	0	0	0
Section 27 - International Relations	0	0	0	0
Section 28 - Relations within the UK	0	0	0	0
Section 29 - The Economy	0	0	0	0
Section 30 - Investigations and Proceedings Conducted by Public Authorities	0	0	0	0

Section 31 - Law Enforcement	3	10	3	8
Section 32 - Court Records	0	0	0	0
Section 33 - Audit Function	0	0	0	0
Section 34 - Parliamentary Privilege	0	0	0	0
Section 35 - Formulation of government policy and Ministerial Communications	0	0	0	0
Section 36 - Effective Conduct of Public Affairs	1	0	0	0
Section 37 - Communications with the Royal Family and the granting of honours	0	0	0	0
Section 38 - Health and Safety	0	0	0	0
Section 39 - Environmental Information	0	0	0	0
Section 40(1) - Personal Information of the requester	10	26	11	17
Section 40(2) - Personal Information				
Section 41 - Information provided 'In Confidence'	3	1	0	1



Section 42 - Legal Professional Privilege	0	0	0	0
Section 43 - Commercial Interest	8	3	0	4
Section 44 - Prohibitions on Disclosure	0	0	0	0

Exception	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Regulation 12(4)(a) - Information not held	1	1	1	3
Regulation 12(4)(b) - Manifestly unreasonable requests	0	1	0	1
Regulation 12(4)(c) - Requests formulated in too general a manner	0	0	0	0
Regulation 12(4)(d) - Material in the course of completion, unfinished documents and incomplete data	0	0	0	0
Regulation 12(4)(e) - Internal communications	0	0	0	0
Regulation 12(5)(a) - International relations, defence, national security or public safety	0	0	0	0
Regulation 12(5)(b) – The course of justice and inquiries exception	0	1	0	0
Regulation 12(5)(c) - Intellectual property rights	0	0	0	0

Regulation 12(5)(d) - Confidentiality of proceedings	0	0	0	0
Regulation 12(5)(e) - Confidentiality of commercial or industrial information	0	0	0	0
Regulation 12(5)(f) - Interests of the person who provided the information to the public authority	0	0	0	0
Regulation 12(5)(g) - Protection of the environment	0	0	0	0
Regulation 13 - Personal information	0	1	0	0