

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) are very similar and are dealt with through the same process. The figures given below are for both FOI and EIR requests.

1. Responses within 20 days

Public authorities are obliged to reply to FOI/EIR requests within 20 days.

Between April 2015 and March 2016 we responded to a total of 1472 requests, a small increase on the previous year. 89% of responses were sent within 20 days. The table below shows how this compares to previous years.

Year	No. of requests	% on time
2015-2016	1494	89%
2014-2015	1472	91%
2013-2014	1364	84%
2012-2013	1150	77%
2011-2012	1039	74%
2010-2011	875	75%
2009-2010	822	81%
2008-2009	779	86%
2007-2008	499	83%
2006-2007	509	73%
2005-2006	505	65%

2. When information was not provided, our reasons were:

Outcome	
Information not held	182
Info not given, exempt	146
Info not given, cost	49
Info not given, vexatious request	2

3. Refusals and exemptions

The FOI Act and EIRs contains exemptions that allow public authorities to withhold information in certain cases. We applied exemptions in 146 cases last year. These were as follows:

Exemption	Number of times used
FOI Act	
Section 21 – <i>Info accessible by some other means</i>	17
Section 22 – <i>Intended for future publication</i>	1

Section 31 – <i>Law Enforcement</i>	66
Section 36 – <i>Effective conduct of public affairs</i>	2
Section 38 – <i>Health and Safety</i>	2
Section 40 – <i>Personal Information</i>	44
Section 41 – <i>Provided in confidence</i>	3
Section 42 – <i>Legal Professional privilege</i>	1
Section 43 – <i>Commercial Interests</i>	3
EIRs	
Regulation 12 4 (a) – <i>information not held</i>	2
Regulation 12 4 (e) – <i>internal documents</i>	2
Regulation 12 5 (e) – <i>Confidentiality of commercial information</i>	1
Regulation 12 5 (f) – <i>Interests of person who provided the information</i>	2

4. Internal reviews and complaints about FOI/EIR responses

If a customer is unhappy with an FOI/EIR response or with the way we handled the request, they can ask for an Internal Review of their request. We dealt with 52 in 2015-16. The outcomes were as follows:

Decision	No.	%
Not Upheld	30	58
Partly Upheld	10	19
Upheld	12	23

5. Information Commissioner's office enquiries

If the requester remains dissatisfied with the response they can approach the office of the Information Commissioner (ICO) to ask them to review our decision.

During 15/16 the ICO made decisions on just two cases, both were settled by a local resolution.

6. Services receiving most enquiries

The Environmental Services and Community Safety directorate dealt with the largest number of enquiries: 394 (26% of total requests received), and responded to 90% on time.

The second busiest directorate was **The Children and Young People's Service**, who received 145 requests, responding to 90% on time, closely followed by The Shared Services who dealt with 142 requests and responded to 87% of them on time. Of the 142 requests dealt with by Shared Services, 90 (63%) were for Revenues, regarding council tax and business rates.