

Gareth Walker  
[request-10148-41536557@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-10148-41536557@whatdotheyknow.com)

My ref  
Your Ref: SMBC/15944  
Please ask for: Nigel Parr  
Telephone No: 0121 569 3248  
e-Mail: nigel\_parr@sandwell.gov.uk  
Date: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2009

Dear Mr Walker,

### **Freedom of Information Request: Freedom of Information Statistics**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request concerning the number of FOI requests received by the Council and the corresponding costs associated with answering these enquiries.

In response to your questions, I can confirm the following:

#### **1. Total Number of applications received**

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 to 08/04/2009
279	196	227	390	124

In Autumn 2005, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDEA) produced a report entitled "Freedom of Information Act 2000: the First Six Months", based on responses to a questionnaire sent to a number of local authorities. The average response time, based on those authorities who responded, was 13.8 hours per Freedom of Information enquiry.

Sandwell Council does not record the total number of hours spent answering each enquiry, but using this average and the costs of £25 per person hour, adopted by the Ministry of Justice, I can provide the following details as to costs.

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009 to 08/04/2009
£96,255	£67,620	£78,315	£131,100	£42,780

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These are estimated costs as some requests may take more or less time to answer and are based solely on the IDEA survey.

## 2. Total number of applications and costs of responding to requests from media organisations

The Council did not corporately retain information as to who was making requests from 2005-2007, but has started to do so from 2008. The information as to the number of requests made by all media organisations and corresponding costs can be found below:

2008		2009 to 08/04/2009	
82	£28,290	34	£11,730

Details as to the number of requests and corresponding costs specifically in respect of requests from the Express and Star Newspaper Group and the Taxpayers' Alliance can be found below:

Express and Star:

2008		2009 to 08/04/2009	
16	£5,520	12	£4,140

Taxpayers' Alliance:

2008		2009 to 08/04/2009	
7	£2,415	2	£690

Yours sincerely

**Nigel Parr**

**Data Protection/Freedom of Information Officer  
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**

**Governance Services**

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