



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA  
www.number10.gov.uk  
0207 930 4433

3 August 2009

Dear Ms Peel

Thank you for your e-mail of 3 July, in which you request information regarding the e-petitions system under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (The 'Act').

1. *How many petitions have been submitted to the petition site.*
2. *How many petitions have been allowed and not rejected*
3. *How many petitions have closed*

Information already published is exempt from the Act by virtue of section 21. This information is freely available on the e-petition website by selecting 'View E-petitions'. For reference, as of 27 July, we have 4977 open, 23399 closed and 33639 rejected e-petitions for a total of 62015 e-petitions submitted to the Prime Minister's Office.

4. *Of the petitions that have closed, how many reached or passed the minimum point of 500 signatures in order to obtain a response.*

The Prime Minister's Office has responded to 2600 e-petitions to date.

5. *Of those petitions that did not get the 500 signatures:*
  - a. *how many received a response*
  - b. *what was the average time for a response to be provided*
6. *Of those petitions that did reach the 500 signatures,*
  - a. *how many received a response*
  - b. *what was the average time for a response to be provided*

*Since the Prime Minister himself does not answer most of the petitions, it would also be useful for you to provide the following information:*

*7. Which departments are more frequently asked to respond on behalf of the Prime Minister to the E-Petitions*

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit for central Government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3 ½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

The information that you request is not held in a way that the Prime Minister's Office can provide without staff manually accessing each of the 62,015 e-petitions that have been submitted to extract the relevant data. Even at an arbitrary 1 minute per record, this substantially exceeds the costs limit.

*8. Whether anyone is responsible for ensuring that responses to the petitions are followed up*

*9. What reasons are provided for petitions that are not responded to.*

The Act allows access to information that is held by a public authority; it does not place any onus on a public authority to create information to answer questions where no information is initially held. We do not hold any information relevant to your request.

Yours sincerely

*N Howard*

**NICHOLAS HOWARD**

Ms Robyn Peel



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LONDON SW1A 2AA

If you are unhappy with the level of service you have received from this office in relation to any aspect of your request, you may ask for an internal review.

You should contact:

Sue Gray  
Director  
Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2AS

Email: [foiteam@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:foiteam@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk)

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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