

## Corporate Services Division

Central Freedom of Information Team  
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Richard Jackson  
[Request-1663-58f34db1@whatdotheyknow.com](#)

Your Ref:

Our Ref: FOI 17399

Date: 26 September 2008

Dear Mr Jackson

### Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Follow-Up Response

Thank you for your comments and queries in relation to our FOI response of 5<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

No further written guidance on the means by which the source of a request is to be identified is available to staff, other than that supplied to you. In most cases, the source is usually clear from information supplied in the incoming letter or email. As far as I'm aware, staff across the eleven Northern Ireland Departments are generally not using lists of journalists, campaigners, etc. Such requesters are normally well known because of their public-facing activities. And, in some cases, requesters will volunteer information about their background and motives for writing.

There is certainly scope for the same person to make requests in different contexts. Again, indicative information may be drawn from the terms of the incoming communication. However, the categorisation process is not an exact science, and is used mainly with a view to serving management information needs. Moreover, our concern is principally with the processing of the request for information not the source of the request, ie, the request not the requester.

I can confirm that the information redacted from the document supplied to you does not fall within the scope of your request. Public authorities are obliged to respond to requests for 'information' as opposed to 'documents', though in certain circumstances the content of a whole document(s) may fall within the terms of a request.

Information about the work of the Northern Ireland Civil Service's FOI Practitioners' Group has not been published to date, though proactive dissemination of information is being considered as part of our preparations for introducing a new model

publication scheme in January 2009. Requests for information in relation to the Group could be submitted to OFMDFM or any of the other Northern Ireland Departments, as all are represented on it.

Please contact me if you have any queries about this letter, remembering to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

**David Lammey**  
**Head of Central Freedom of Information Team**