



Northern
Ireland
Office

Northern Ireland Office
Freedom of Information Team
Stormont House
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SH

T 028 90765431
E foi@nio.gov.uk

Jenna Corderoy

request-647085-afabb48d@whatdotheyknow.com

www.gov.uk/nio
@niopressoffice

13 March 2020

Dear Ms Corderoy,

REFERENCE: FOI 20/40

Thank you for your email dated 17 February 2020 in which you requested a copy of the following information from the Northern Ireland Office:

This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

My request relates to how the Department processes FOI requests, as well as the training it receives when handling FOI requests.

I would like to request the following information:

(1) Please provide all guidelines and related documents that are used when processing FOI requests. I expect this to include all guidelines and related documents that are used when refusing requests, as well as documents relating to updates on FOI case law.

(2) Please provide all FOI training materials that the Department holds. I expect this to include guidelines, briefings, and such documents, including presentation slides.

Please also provide the following information:

(3) Please indicate how frequently the Department trains its staff in relation to FOI. Please indicate who provides the FOI training, and please indicate when they held training sessions (in the past three calendar years). Please also provide copies of their training materials.

(4) If the FOI training is outsourced, please indicate who provides the FOI training, and please indicate when they held training sessions (in the past three calendar years). Please also provide copies of their training materials.

I would like to receive this information in an electronic format. If you feel that a substantive response to this request is not possible within a reasonable time frame, I



would be grateful if you could contact me and provide assistance as to how I can refine the request. If you need any clarification, please contact me. I look forward to receiving a response in 20 working days.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Q1&2. Please see attached training material in respect of questions 1 and 2.

Q3. The NIO has a central FOI team who manage and co-ordinate all FOI requests. The FOI manager meets with members of staff that are new to the department to discuss their responsibilities under the FOIA and the processes in place to deal with FOI requests within the statutory timescale. The attached FOI guidance is readily available on the NIO intranet for staff to refer to. The FOI team also provide advice and assistance to staff on a case by case basis as required.

Q4. FOI training is not outsourced.

If you believe this reply is not in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 you may ask for an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. If you request a review you should do so in writing stating the reasons.

If following an internal review you were to remain dissatisfied you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner and ask him to investigate whether the NIO has complied with the terms of the FOIA. You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

The Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. Further details on the role of the Information Commissioner and the handling of appeals can be found at: www.ico.org.uk

If you wish to discuss this please contact the Freedom of Information Team using the contact details provided at the top of the first page. Please remember to quote your reference in any correspondence.



Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Manager

