



HM Revenue & Customs

Mr Peter Hills

By email:

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Dear Mr Hills

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Thank you for your email of 24 August, which seeks a review of our original response to your information request. Please accept our apologies for the considerable delay in replying.

Original request

On 2 August, you asked for the following information:

“Please can you provide me with number of brewers registered with HMRC or the relevant department (Customs and Excise) each year between 1988 and 2019.”

Our response

We replied on 24 August 2020, answering your request in full. We provided new brewer registrations data for every year from 2003 to 2019.

Internal review request

On 24 August you asked us to review our handling of your request:

“I am writing to request an internal review of HM Revenue and Customs’ handling of my FOI request 'Request for annual count of beer brewing companies from 1988 to 2019'.

My request was for an annual count of brewing companies registered with HMRC. Instead I received a count of brewing companies added annually. With neither the original number of breweries nor the annual number of breweries who have closed down I cannot extrapolate the information I have requested. Can I have an annual count as requested please.”

Internal review

The purpose of this review is to assess how your request was handled and to determine whether the original decision given to you was correct.

We received your request on 2 August and replied by email on 24 August. This was within the statutory deadline in compliance with section 10(1) of the FOIA.

The response also set out our review procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner, as required by section 17(7) of the FOIA.

Considerations

You requested the number of brewers registered with us each year between 1988 and 2019. We interpreted this as asking about new registrations recorded each year. You have confirmed our interpretation was incorrect, so please accept our apologies for any inconvenience caused.

We have a database for managing brewery registrations. It is a simple system designed to track existing breweries and was never intended to produce historical brewery information. We are therefore unable to extract year-end figures, so cannot offer an annual count of breweries for each past year. We can, however, tell you about breweries registered and deregistered each year. This data is provided in the table below.

Please note, some manual manipulation was required to extract data beyond a basic count of current breweries. The figures should therefore be treated with caution and considered experimental statistics.

Also, our records were centralised during 2003. Prior to this time registrations records were held locally and therefore may not be complete. For this reason, 2003 has higher numbers showing. Further, the new registrations data differs from that provided in our original response. We identified a number of calculation errors which have now been addressed. Resolving these discrepancies partly explains why our review response is so late.

	New Registrations	Deregistered
1993	66	3
1994	11	0
1995	11	1
1996	8	0
1997	22	1
1998	25	4
1999	26	1
2000	19	1
2001	34	3
2002	35	4
2003	427	89
2004	100	41
2005	139	61
2006	126	94
2007	113	82
2008	120	72
2009	86	64
2010	151	70
2011	197	65
2012	285	93
2013	263	112
2014	350	144
2015	337	197
2016	542	246
2017	435	237
2018	369	271
2019	296	292
2020	281	180

Conclusion

We have carefully reconsidered your original request and provided new data that better matches the information you seek. We hope you find this to be a satisfactory outcome.

Appeal process

If you are not content with the outcome of this internal review you can [complain to the Information Commissioner's Office](#).

Yours sincerely,

HM Revenue and Customs