



Northern  
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Office

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Section 40

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**24 May 2021**

Dear Section 40,

REFERENCE: FOI – 21/75

Thank you for your email of 23 April 2021 in which you requested the following information from the Northern Ireland Office:

**Please could you provide me with information regarding the introduction of any wellbeing days or mental health days for the employees in your department? By wellbeing days, I mean days off given to employees to help them prioritise wellness or mental health. Some companies have introduced these days in response to the stress of the pandemic.**

**I would like to know:**

- a. Have you introduced a wellbeing day for your employees?**
- b. If so, does this apply to all your employees or just some?**
- c. When was it introduced?**



- d. Can the wellbeing day be taken off by employees at anytime of the year, or is there a specific date when everyone takes a day off together?**
- e. Why did you introduce a wellbeing day?**

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

The NIO takes staff welfare extremely seriously and recognising staff wellbeing is an ongoing priority within the department, especially during the covid pandemic.

The NIO has not introduced a wellbeing day off. However, we have provided our people with a range of advice, guidance and sessions on wellbeing.

Wellbeing tips are also available to staff through our Staff Wellbeing Guide, through which they can be signposted to other external sources of support.

NIO staff also have access to confidential support through the Employee Assistance Programme, as well as support from the Mental Health First Aiders.

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](http://www.ico.org.uk)

If you wish to discuss this letter or our handling of your request, 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.

Thank you for your interest in the Northern Ireland Office.

Yours sincerely

**Freedom of Information Manager**

