

23 March 2022

Case Reference IC-158261-K8M9

Your request

You asked us for the following:

"In financial years 2019/2020 and 2020/2021, what percentage of complaints to the ICO under s.50 FOIA were finally resolved within 6 months of receipt by the ICO.

If the percentage is less than the "90%" target referred to in the FOS Service Standards, please provide copies of documents indicating what, if any, specific steps the ICO has taken, and/or is taking, to achieve that service standard, in the light of the actual figures for these years."

Where your questions satisfy the criteria of a valid information request, we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Our response

Regarding the first part of your request, we can confirm that we do indeed hold information within scope and it is accessible to you via the Operational Performance annex in our published [Annual reports | ICO](#).

Information already available to you is technically exempt under section 21 of the FOIA.

Regarding the second part of your request, and assuming you are referring to the [ICO's service standards](#) rather than the FOS's, we can confirm that the ICO does not hold any information within scope of your request. However, please note the following extracts from the two relevant reports:

2019-20: *"Despite these ongoing high case volumes, we have been able to keep pace, closing 6,421 cases during the year, an increase from last year's figure of 6,293. This means that in 2019/20 we exceeded our FOI timeliness target (to close 80% FOI complaints within six months), by closing 88% of complaints within six months."*

2020-21: *"The wider, national conditions surrounding the pandemic clearly suppressed the overall volume of cases received through the year, however, we have seen a gradual return to usual levels of intake as the year has progressed. The rise in the active caseload through the year reflects the migration of our casework to a new system, from which these figures are generated, and was completed in Q3. We have managed this caseload reasonably well, closing exactly 4,000 cases during the year. There has been some build-up of the caseload, which we will be working to address over the course of the 2021/22 financial year.*

All our casework function was successfully transferred to a homeworking environment from the outset of the lockdown restrictions; however, these same arrangements have influenced the way in which some public authorities have been able to deal with our enquiries. The very nature of the information sought has meant that the lack of physical access to documents and storage facilities has impacted on the average age of our cases. There will be a focus on these matters as lockdown restrictions are lifted to be able to progress the oldest cases as soon as possible, nonetheless, there is an obvious effect on both those cases over 12 months old as well as the age profile generally. It is anticipated that this will be rectified in the medium term."

This concludes our response.

I hope you find this information helpful.