

FOI 528/2015

REQUEST

RE: Freedom of Information Request - Time spent handling Freedom of Information requests

I am carrying out research into the time used by Local Authorities in England to manage Freedom of Information requests.

To aid me in this I would like to make a Freedom of Information request for the following data.

If you are retaining requests on an MS-Excel spreadsheet that logs FOI requests I would like a copy of the spreadsheet provided electronically covering the years 2012 to the present time.

The spreadsheet should include if possible the type of requester (eg local resident, researcher, commercial, press and media) and the time spent handling each request. Obviously I accept that specific personal data of the requester will be withheld.

If you do not hold the data electronically I would like to know totals of time spent for each year from 2012 to the present for the categories of the requester that you may hold (eg press and media, research, commercial).

Ideally I would like data broken down by the following categories:-

Press and Media

Commercial

Research

Local Resident (or member of public if you do not retain a category for your own residents)

Other

It may be that you hold the data on a spreadsheet using different categories - I will accept whatever you may have in this respect.

RESPONSE

Further to your FOI request, please find below the answers to your questions:-

The Council keeps details of all FOI requests received on a database style system which was created by our IT Team some years ago. Only within the last 2 years has this database been properly utilised and therefore only contains information going back to January 2014. I am unable to send this database to you as I have no way of redacting the addresses etc of requesters.

We also do not hold information on time spent on requests as we would only record this if the request was going to invoke the costs limit i.e. exceed 18 hours of officer time and this is a fairly infrequent occurrence.

However I do have information on how many requests have been received since 2011 and also the types of requesters we record statistical information on if this helps.

We keep our statistics in calendar year and these are as follows:-

2011 – 341
2012 – 336
2013 – 479
2014 – 656
2015 – up to 30/09/2015 – 426

Total – 2,238

These figures do not include EIR requests specifically in relation to Local Land Charges Search information which equate to around 800 requests approximately each year.

Percentage of requests received from the following groups:

- Media 12% (over the years specified above)
- General public or individuals 43%
- Business 35%
- Councillors/MPs and “Others” 10%