

15th April 2022

By Email

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ref: FOI 1703

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to you in response to your Freedom of Information request received by the Patient and Client Council (PCC) on 30th March 2022 in which you requested information relating to the impact of Covid-19 on FOI responsiveness.

Please find this information, [below / attached]

- 1) For the period 16th March – 17th July 2020 (i.e., when ICO had indicated a sympathetic approach to delay), provide precise data if available e.g., 15 out of 30 requests, and if not, provide an estimate e.g., 10%, for these questions:**
 - a. how many responses to FOI requests were issued within 20 working days of receipt by your organisation?**
2/2
 - b. how many responses to FOI review requests were issued within 20 working days of receipt of the request for an internal review?**
0/0
 - c. how many responses to FOI requests were issued within 21 and 60 working days of receipt by your organisation?**
0/0
 - d. how many responses to FOI review requests were issued within 21 and 60 working days of receipt of the request for an internal review?**

0/0

2) For the period 18th July – 8th October 2020 (i.e., during the ‘preparing for recovery’ phase), provide precise data if available e.g., 15 out of 30 requests, and if not, provide an estimate e.g., 10%, for these questions:

a. how many responses to FOI requests were issued within 20 working days of receipt by your organisation?

0/0

b. how many responses to FOI review requests were issued within 20 working days of receipt of the request for an internal review?

0/0

c. how many responses to FOI requests were issued within 21 and 60 working days of receipt by your organisation?

0/0

d. how many responses to FOI review requests were issued within 21 and 60 working days of receipt of the request for an internal review?

0/0

3) During the period 1st March to 30th October 2020, provide precise data if available e.g., 15 out of 30 requests, and if not, provide an estimate e.g., 10%, for these questions:

a. how many responses to FOI requests were issued more than 60 working days after receipt of the request?

0/0

b. how many responses to FOI review requests were issued more than 60 working days after receipt of a request for an internal review?

0/0

4) When FOI request or review responses were issued more than 21 working days after receipt during the period 1st March and 30th October 2020, what were the main reasons for the delay? e.g., closure of premises due to Covid-19, reallocation of resources due to Covid-19, staff shortages due to Covid-19, absence of key staff due to Covid-19, limited access to necessary systems due to Covid-19, other issue related/unrelated to Covid19.

Not applicable

5) In relation to the FOI requests received by your organisation between 1st March and 30th October 2020, what proportion related directly to

Covid-19, your organisation's Covid-19 response or impact of the pandemic on your organisation? (Provide precise data if available e.g., 15 out of 30 requests, and if not, provide an estimate e.g., 10%)

0/0

6) On 17th July 2020 the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) launched a self-assessment Freedom of Information toolkit (FOI self-assessment toolkit | ICO) to help public authorities respond to FOI requests as they prepared to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

a. Does, or has your organisation ever, use/d the toolkit? If so, please explain whether it has had any positive outcomes.

The PCC has not used this toolkit

b. If your organisation has not/does not make use of the toolkit, please explain why

The PCC does not believe that Covid-19 impacted its statutory obligations in responding to freedom of information requests

7) In response to Covid19, has the volume of information your organisation publishes:

- not changed
- significantly increased
- significantly decreased
- don't know

Not changed.

8) Has your organisation taken steps to proactively publish information relating to Covid-19, your organisation's Covid-19 response or the impact of the pandemic on your organisation? If it includes a dedicated webpage, please provide a link to the webpage.

The PCC is part of the health and Social Care in Northern Ireland. Health and Social care publish Covid-19 related information at the following link <https://covid-19.hscni.net/>

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to The Business Services Organisation (BSO), which provides an Information Governance service on our behalf:

Post: Information Governance Manager,
2 Franklin Street,
Belfast,

BT2 8DQ

Email: foi.bso@hscni.net


If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

Website: www.ico.org.uk
Phone: 0303 123 1113
Email: icocasework@ico.org.uk
Post: Information Commissioner's Office
3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place
Belfast
BT7 2JB

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,



Carol Collins
Business Support Manager