

✓ **Topics**

Departments (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations>)

✓ **Government activity**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) [\(/coronavirus\)](/coronavirus) Guidance and support

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2. [Crime, justice and the law \(https://www.gov.uk/browse/justice\)](https://www.gov.uk/browse/justice)
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How to make a freedom of information (FOI) request

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How to make an FOI request

You must make a Freedom of Information (FOI) request in writing. You can do it by:

- letter
- email
- social media
- online form - check the organisation's website or the [government department's \(https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations) page to see if they have an online form
- fax

If you cannot make your request in writing because of a disability, contact the public authority. They should help you to make the request another way - for example over the phone.

You can ask for environmental information in writing, in person or by phone.

Before you make a request

You might not need to make a Freedom of Information (FOI) request if the organisation has:

- already published the information
- previously responded to an FOI request

Check their website for responses to previous FOI requests. This is sometimes known as a 'disclosure log'. You can [search for published responses to FOI requests \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?keywords=&publication_filter_option=foi-releases&topics%5B%5D=all&departments\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?keywords=&publication_filter_option=foi-releases&topics%5B%5D=all&departments) from government departments, agencies and arms length bodies.

You can also email or phone the organisation to ask if they've already published the information or responded to an FOI request.

What to include

Related content

- [Data protection \(/data-protection\)](#)

You should give:

- your name (not needed if you're asking for environmental information)
- a contact postal or email address
- a detailed description of the information you want - for example, you might want all information held on a subject, or just a summary

You can ask for information in a particular format, such as:

- paper or electronic copies of information
- audio format
- large print

When you'll get a response

The organisation should send you the information within 20 working days of receiving your request. Some schools are allowed more time during school holidays.

In Scotland, you should allow 6 extra days if you send your request by post.

The organisation will tell you when to expect the information if they need more time.

When your information will be shared

If you've sent an [FOI](#) request to several government departments, they may share your name and request between them. This is to help deal with your enquiry more effectively.

No other details will be shared and your information will not be used for any other purpose.

Costs

Most requests are free but you might be asked to pay a small amount for photocopies or postage. The organisation will tell you if you have to pay anything.

Check the copyright status (<https://www.gov.uk/topic/intellectual-property/copyright>) of information you receive if you plan to reproduce it.

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Explore the topic

- [Your rights and the law \(/browse/justice/rights\)](#)

Elsewhere on the web

- [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)
(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents>)

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