

Freedom of Information

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Headlines

- New EIRs guidance published, p.17
- ICO launches new resources to assist health sector with records management, p.18
- Ireland FOI Regulations corrected, p.19

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FOI monitoring to increase to 90%

The Information Commissioner has raised the threshold that triggers the ICO's monitoring of public authorities when responding to freedom of information requests.

Public authorities will now be considered for monitoring if fewer than 90% of their FOI responses fall within the statutory timescale. It is a 5% raise on the previous figure, 85%, which in an interview with the BBC last year, Elizabeth Denham suggested was too lenient.

The ICO's guidance on how it selects public authorities for monitoring states that in monitoring timeliness, the ICO's Performance Improvement Department has adopted some general 'rules of thumb' which will be used to direct attention towards those authorities experiencing the most difficulty.

The ICO may contact authorities if:

- its analysis of complaints suggests that it has received in the region of 4 to 8 or more complaints citing delays within a specific

authority within a six month period;

- (for those authorities which publish data on timeliness) — it appears that less than 90% of requests are receiving a response within the appropriate timescales; and/or
- where there is evidence of a possible problem in the media, other external sources or internal business intelligence.

The ICO states in its guidance that it will continue to be proportionate

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Public appointments process not transparent, says Committee

The process of appointing officials to senior roles at public bodies lacks transparency, according to a Committee of MPs tasked with reviewing recent changes to how such appointments are conducted.

The Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee said it was concerned ministers are setting the appointments code, rather than the independent regulator.

The MPs also said they were not convinced that candidates were not being deliberately excluded from high profile public appointments on an arbitrary basis.

Changes were made to the appointments process last year following a review led by businessman Sir Gerry Grimstone. At that time, Sir Gerry said his proposals would strengthen current procedures and that transpar-

ency and accountability would remain 'key elements'.

The government implemented the Grimstone report's recommendations, which included that:

- ministers should continue to make public appointments on merit;
- ministers should be assisted by advisory

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