Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, has spoken out about plans to extend the scope of the UK Freedom of Information Act. Under the current legislation, councils, government departments, NHS bodies, charities and the police are covered, but the intention is to extend this to include more bodies, such as the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, the Financial Services Ombudsman and the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Another proposal is to make the Information Commissioner’s Office independent of the Ministry of Justice, because although it is an independent public body, it is currently dependent on funds from the Ministry of Justice for its FOI activities.

The coalition government also wants to cut the length of time that government records can be kept secret, from 30 years to just 20.

The deputy PM said: “It is a fundamental right of all citizens to be able to hold their government to account. The coalition government is committed to making this the most open government ever.

“We want to make it easy for people to find out information that is relevant to them, to ensure that public bodies are acting in the public interest and providing good value for money.

“The goal is the greater transparency we desire and the public deserves.”

In response to the plans, Information Commissioner Christopher Graham, said: “I welcome the proposals that the

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