New figures show that Boris Johnson’s government is making coordinated moves to undermine accountability, according to public policy commentator and analyst Richard Vize. Writing in the Guardian, Mr Vize said that FOI and scrutiny of government decisions are under attack: “Through obstruction and neglect, ministers and civil servants are choking off our right to know what they are doing and how they spend our money. Meanwhile Boris John-

son and his cabinet are replacing rigorous journalistic questioning with shallow social media stunts, creating a mirage of openness and accountabil-

ity while hiding away from any real interroga-

tion”, he writes. The piece was published following a Whitehall Monitor report by the Institute for Government showing that adherence to FOIA is on the verge of collapse, with depart-

ments ignoring their legal duties to supply infor-

mation.

The report points out that in the early years of the Act, departments were routinely approving more than half of FOI re-
quests (although the For-

eign Office and Cabinet Office have almost always refused 60% or more). However, since the coalition government came in in 2010, the culture in Whitehall began to change, with depart-

ments such as the Treas-

ury, HMRC, Home Office, justice, health, communi-

ties, culture and environ-

ment becoming increas-

(Continued on page 17)