

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham Annual Request for Information Report 2024-2025

1. Operation management of information requests

The Resident Experience Team manages Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), Subject Access Requests (SAR), and Individual Rights Requests (IRR), ensuring compliance with legal requirements. FOIA and EIR follow the same process. For this report, LBHF will refer to FOIA and EIR requests collectively as Requests for Information (RFIs). The figures below represent both FOI and EIR requests.

The Information Management Team in Corporate Services ensures LBHF's compliance with the FOIA 2000, EIR 2004, and Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). They monitor RFI performance, investigate complaints/internal reviews, and liaise with the ICO.

More information on this legislation can be found at the website for the Information Commissioner's Office: <http://www.ico.gov.uk/> .

2. Responses within statutory time limits

Public authorities are required to respond to Requests for Information (RFIs) under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) within 20 working days. In certain situations, this period may be extended to up to 40 working days where the legislation permits such an extension. Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs) and Individual Rights Requests (IRRs) must be addressed within 28 working days of receiving the necessary proof of address and identification, unless the request is complex or large. In such cases, a period of up to three months may be taken to provide a full response. Disclosure Requests (DRs) should also be answered within 20 working days.

3. Requests For Information (RFIs)

Between April 2024 and March 2025 - 1350 RFIs were received. This was a decrease of 13% compared to 2023/2024.

Received RFI requests	Request volumes
2022/2023	1503
2023/2024	1550
2024/2025	1350

3.1 Percentage of RFIs closed within statutory time limits by year

Year	Number of RFI's received 24/25	Number of RFI's closed in 24/25	Number RFI's closed in time	% closed in time
2024-2025	1350	1317	1024	78%

A total of 1,024 RFIs were responded to on time, achieving a performance rate of 78%.

The table below presents the 2024/25 performance in relation to statutory time limits by service department. All RFIs that required responses from multiple services are included under the Resident Experience Team.

Directorate	Number of requests received in 24/25	Number of requests closed in 24/25	Responded to on time in 24/25	% answered in time in 24/25
Corporate and Finance	326	383	269	70%
Housing	160	78	43	55%
People	251	249	216	87%
Place	531	532	435	82%
Resident Experience (multi service requests)	82	75	61	81%
Total	1350	1317	1024	78%

The Directorate groups were changed in 2024.

3.2 Outcomes of Requests for Information (RFI's)

The table lists the outcomes for all RFIs that were closed under FOIA for LBHF in the 2024/25 financial year.

RFI Outcome	Amount
All information sent	795
Complaint upheld	1
Exceeds appropriate limit - refused	33
Exempt	1
Exempt and exceed limit	1

Forwarded to Information management team	1
Information exempt	2
Information not held	94
Internal review - Upheld - partial	12
Internal review - withdrawn	3
Neither confirm or deny information held	4
No information sent - all held but exempt	69
Not upheld	11
Part exempt and exceeds appropriate limit	5
Repeated request	2
Request lapsed: requested information not provided	14
Some exceeds limit	3
Some exempt	3
Some information except	1
Some information held not all sent	2
Some information sent and exceeds appropriate limit	26
Some information sent but not all held	111
Some information sent but part exempt	113
Some information sent, part exempt and exceeds limit	4
Some not held	1
Upheld - full	4
Vexatious request	1
Grand Total	1317

3.3 Refusals and exemptions

The FOIA allows public authorities to withhold information under specific exemptions (called exceptions under the EIRs). The following outlines the instances where these exemptions or exceptions were used for cases closed in the 2024/25 financial year. Note that these numbers refer to cases concluded in 2024/25, not those scheduled for resolution during this period. Multiple exemptions or exceptions may have been applied in some cases:

Exemption/Exception	Number of times used
Freedom of Information Act 2000	
Section 21 – Information accessible by some other means	64
Section 22 – Intended for future publication	25
Section 23 – Information supplied by or relating to security bodies	0
Section 24 – National security	2
Section 30	2

Section 31 – Law enforcement	17
Section 32 – Court records	3
Section 36 – Prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs	6
Section 38 – Health and safety	1
Section 40 – Personal Information	76
Section 41 – Provided in confidence	6
Section 42 – Legal Professional privilege	3
Section 43 – Commercial Interests	36
Environmental Information Regulations 2004	
Regulation 6(1)(b) - Information accessible by other means	1
Regulation 12(3) - Personal data	1
Regulation 12(4)(b) - Manifestly unreasonable	1
Regulation 12(4)(e) - Internal communications	2
Regulation 12(5)(e) - Confidentiality of commercial or industrial information	3
Regulation 12(5)(f) - Interests of the person who provided the information voluntarily	4

4 Subject Access Requests (SARs)

Many SARs are managed directly by the relevant service area. SARs that require input from multiple teams are coordinated by the Resident Experience Team. If a requestor is not satisfied with the response received, they may request an Internal Review conducted by the Information Management Team. Should the requester remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the Internal Review or the handling of their complaint, they have the option to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a further review of the decision.

The number of SARs received by the council in 2024/2025 has increased by 51%.

Received SARs	Request volumes
2022/2023	189
2023/2024	209
2024/2025	315

4.1 Percentage of SARs closed within statutory time limits by year

Year	No SARs received	No SARs closed	No. of SARs closed in time	% closed in time
2024-2025	315	272	180	66%

In 2024/2025, 180 SARs were closed on time, achieving a performance rate of 66%.

The table below shows the service directorate breakdown for 2024/25 for received and closed cases for each Directorate.

Directorate	Number of requests received in 24/25	Number of requests closed in 24/25	Responded to on time in 24/25	% answered in time in 24/25
Corporate and Finance	37	38	31	82%
Housing	122	113	64	57%
People	100	71	43	61%
Place	18	14	14	100%
Resident Experience (multi service requests)	38	36	28	78%
Total	315	272	180	66%

The Directorate groups were changed in 2024.

4.2 SAR Outcomes

Outcome	Amount
Forwarded to Information management team	2
Information disclosed in full - Internal review request received on 12/05/2025	1
Information disclosed in full (closed)	149
Information exempt (closed)	24
Information not held (closed)	23
Information partially disclosed (closed)	55
Internal review - Upheld - partial (closed)	8
Not upheld (closed)	6
Upheld - full (closed)	4
Grand Total	272

5 Disclosure Requests (DR's)

A DR refers to a request for information regarding an individual that may be maintained by an organisation. These requests can be submitted for various purposes. Certain organisations, including the police, solicitors, probation services, and HMRC, are authorised to request disclosure of information we may hold about an individual, particularly when it pertains to formal investigations or law enforcement activities.

The DRs are recorded and managed exclusively by the Resident Experience Team.

5.1 Number of DRs received

Between April 2024 and March 2025 - 586 were received. This was an increase of 47% compared to 2023/2024.

Received DR requests	Request volumes
2022/2023	269
2023/2024	398
2024/2025	586

5.2 Percentage of DRs responded to within statutory time limits by year

Year	Number of DR received	Number of DR closed	Number of DR closed in time	% answered in time in 24/25
2024-2025	586	558	410	73

There was an increase of 2% in DR's being responded to on time in 2024/2025 compared to 2023/2024.

5.3 DR outcomes

Disclosure Request Outcome	Number of cases
Information not released	181
Information partially released	122
Information released	107

6 Individual Rights Requests (IRRs)

Under the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR 2016, individuals can access or challenge the processing of their personal data held by an organisation. Residents can exercise these rights by submitting a request to the Council under one of the listed rights:

1. The right to be **Informed** - e.g. fair processing/privacy notices and information.
2. The right of **Access** - e.g. subject access requests (SARs)
3. The right to **Rectification** - e.g. correcting your data.
4. The right to **Erasure** – e.g. deleting or removing your data.
5. The right to **Restrict Processing** – e.g. stopping your data being used.
6. The right to **Data Portability** – e.g. transferring your data easily.
7. The right to **Object** – e.g. challenging what we are doing with your data.
8. Rights in **Relation to Automated Decision Making and Profiling** – e.g. ensuring safeguards are in place so we do not make potentially damaging decisions about you without any human involvement.

The Individual Rights Requests are logged and managed solely by the Resident Experience Team, who collaborate with colleagues in multiple service areas such as Children's Services and Adult Social Care.

6.1 IRRs received in 2023/24

Between April 2024 and March 2025 - 7 were received.

Received IRR requests	Request volumes
2022/2023	6
2023/2024	5
2024/2025	7

7 Internal reviews

Received internal reviews	Request volumes	Responses sent within the timescale given
2024/2025	49	91.8%

8 Ensuring Council Information is publicly available

Aside from those which contain personal data, all responses to RFIs are published on the LBHF website at the following address:

<https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/data-and-information/freedom-information/publication-scheme/disclosure-log>

Publishing responses aligns with LBHF's transparency initiative. Furthermore, it helps potential requestors determine if the information they need is already publicly available. This process also enhances efficiency and promotes consistent quality through better monitoring and public review.

9 Improvements in quality and timeliness

Weekly monitoring is performed to oversee all service areas, ensuring that access to information requests are handled correctly and processes are followed according to ICO guidance. This helps maintain responses and ensures communication throughout the case management process, with prompt dispatch of replies. The Strategic Leadership Team and Directors regularly oversee all services.

The Information Management Team (IMT) handles internal reviews and complaint management related to case management and responses. The team also performs internal audits and identifies plans or tasks for improvements.

9.1 Improvements and monitoring

Further improvements and ongoing plans are in place to enhance the service offered, including the quality of responses and timeliness across the council.

We have recently implemented several improvements to support the compliance of the service. These include;

- The introduction of a quality assurance module within the Access to Information System.
- Implementation of a dashboard with current data accessible for all services to utilise for FOI cases, with SARS going live later in 2025.
- A revised publications page, following best practices and guidance from the ICO.
- A recent audit identified satisfactory compliance in this area, with ongoing actions to ensure continued improvements and adherence.

In addition, the below activities are ongoing on a regular basis to monitoring the service:

- Regular training for is provided for all staff members council wide. The consists of external specialised training with systems training and guidance internally.
- Strategic Leadership Team monitors performance through quarterly and weekly reports and dashboards.
- Service areas manage their Information Requests and develop their own action plans to drive improvements.