

EIR Request (received 05 January 2022) - Reference: DFI/2022-0011

I would be grateful if under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 you could let me know how many emails/letters were sent to the Ards and North Down section office individually by the following elected representatives Mr Stephen Farry MP, Mr Alan Chambers MLA, Mr Alex Easton MLA, Mr Andrew Muir MLA, Miss Rachel Woods MLA, and Mr Stephen Dunne MLA during the year 2021.

Response (issued 01 February 2022)

Thank you for your email dated 5 January 2022 requesting, under the Freedom of Information Act, requesting information held by this office about the numbers of emails/letters sent to Ards and North Down Section Office by the six named elected representatives.

In considering your request on behalf of the department I have determined that the information requested falls under the aegis of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, as opposed to the FOI Act 2000.

As EIR relates to public rights of access to information, I must consider whether information is suitable for release to the world at large, and not solely to the applicant. I have examined the information you requested and carried out a public interest test to determine whether this information is suitable for release to the public.

A guide explaining the Environmental Information Regulations can be found at:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-environmental-information-regulations/what-are-the-eir/>.

In response to your request, I can confirm that the Department does hold information related to your request and, following consideration of the public interest in this case, I am satisfied it is suitable for release, and is detailed in the following table:

Correspondence Received	
Name	No.
Mr Stephen Farry MP	1
Mr Alan Chambers MLA	2
Mr Alex Easton MLA	239
Mr Andrew Muir MLA	32
Miss Rachel Woods MLA	4
Mr Stephen Dunne MLA	34

You will be aware that if a member of the public, or public representative, writes to the Department by letter or e-mail, reporting a routine defect then our staff will simply log this information onto our work systems and an automated response detailing the query reference number will issue to the correspondent. Such reports are not treated as correspondence and are not included in the above figures. The above figures relate to the number of letters or emails received which were considered to require a substantive response.

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