

**We were asked:**

How many dossiers or reports presented to or written by the department since 1997 are currently listed as missing or have been destroyed?

**We replied:**

A1. I am unable to comply with your request under Section 12(2) of the FOIA. The Department has estimated that to locate, retrieve and extract information relevant to this request would exceed the appropriate cost limit.

In order to identify all dossiers and reports covering the last 17 years and verify their retention status we would be required to conduct an extensive search back through records of file disposals and transfers. This task would exceed the appropriate cost limit outlined within section 12(2) of the FOIA.

The law allows us to decline to answer requests under FOIA when we estimate that it would cost us more than £600 to identify, locate, and extract the information that has been asked for. The appropriate cost limit is equivalent to 3½ working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour. Consequently, the department is not obliged to comply with your request under section 12(2) the FOIA.

You may wish to refine the scope of your request so to bring it within the appropriate limit, such as narrowing the timeframe of your request. You should note however, that any refined request may still exceed the cost limit.

The department adheres to The National Archives guidance in its retention, transfer and disposal of records.