

Who is responsible for this plan?	PRONI Director											
What is the main objective?	Complete current backlog of overdue FOIA requests and meet and sustain timeliness for answering FOIA requests. Actions to be completed within 9 months.											
What is the timescale?												
Action	What steps do you need to take?	Impact	Why do you need to take this action?	Priority	High/med/low	Owner	Who is responsible for this action?	Start When will you start?	End When are you aiming to finish work on this action?	Review to be updated regularly - what have you done so far, and what is causing delay?	Completed When did you complete the action?	
Procedural - How you handle the requests you receive	Ensure that all FOIA requests are logged and acknowledged within 2 working days with all requests received by PRONI redirected to PRONI's FOIA team within 1 working day of receipt.	Requests are acknowledged and applicants informed that case has been received. This will allow FOIA supervisors to triage requests and allocate to relevant team member to give FOIA team adequate time to complete response.	Requests are acknowledged and applicants informed that case has been received. This will allow FOIA supervisors to triage requests and allocate to relevant team member to give FOIA team adequate time to complete response.	High		PRONI FOIA Team leader		16 April 2025	N/A	This will be reviewed at weekly checkpoint meetings	Ongoing	
	Conduct weekly checkpoint meetings to update FOIA team on progress, identify issues and resolve outstanding problems.	Accurately monitor the progress of requests and be able to address and take action quickly by escalating particular problems to senior members of the FOIA team more quickly.	Accurately monitor the progress of requests and be able to address and take action quickly by escalating particular problems to senior members of the FOIA team more quickly.		High		Deputy Head of Branch		10 January 2025	N/A	Weekly and monthly statistical progress reports to be provided to Head of Branch	Ongoing
	PRONI to establish separate teams to process FOIA requests. Teams will be assigned specific roles and responsibilities. First team will focus on completing complex requests and older requests which were received prior to 2024. Second team will focus on completing new FOIA requests identified by PRONI as routine.	This action will ensure that specially trained staff with greater experience are focused on completing the complex requests. PRONI are dealing with 320 complex requests. Establishing specific teams ensures that routine requests can be redirected into their own workstream and therefore completed more quickly.	This action will ensure that specially trained staff with greater experience are focused on completing the complex requests. PRONI are dealing with 320 complex requests. Establishing specific teams ensures that routine requests can be redirected into their own workstream and therefore completed more quickly.		High		Head of Branch		21 April 2025	31 December 2025	This will be reviewed on a monthly basis to establish if this measure is effective. As the action plan develops and staff gain experience, teams may converge together to reduce backlog of requests where this exists.	Ongoing
	Appoint additional staff on a temporary basis to address backlog.	Following an internal assessment, it was identified that there were insufficient staff with the necessary experience at Curatorial F and E grades allocated to address the FOIA backlog of requests. As a result, the Department for Communities Permanent Secretary allocated additional funding to secure additional temporary staff to address the backlog. These additional staff will enable the backlog to be removed in a more structured and sustainable manner over the next 9 months in order to allow PRONI to achieve statutory compliance with the FOIA.	Following an internal assessment, it was identified that there were insufficient staff with the necessary experience at Curatorial F and E grades allocated to address the FOIA backlog of requests. As a result, the Department for Communities Permanent Secretary allocated additional funding to secure additional temporary staff to address the backlog. These additional staff will enable the backlog to be removed in a more structured and sustainable manner over the next 9 months in order to allow PRONI to achieve statutory compliance with the FOIA.		High		Head of Branch		21 April 2025	31 December 2025	Additional Curatorial F staff were appointed on 7 April 2025. An additional two staff will be temporarily promoted to deal with complex requests and will be in post by late April 2025.	Ongoing
	Devise and implement a timetable for completion of backlog currently comprising 100,000 pages - Timetable will set out key milestones and monthly targets to help monitor progress. The timetable will set out the programme for the release of c.11,000 pages to applicants each month.	PRONI is dealing with a considerable backlog of over 320 complex requests, comprising over 100,000 pages of sensitive and graphic information. The requested information predominantly relates to the NI Troubles and PRONI recognises the completing these requests is a time consuming and difficult process. In order to comply with the deadline of 31 December 2025 as stated in the Practice Recommendation, PRONI must reduce the backlog by over 11,000 pages each month. This could relate to one request or dozens of requests. The timetable will allow PRONI to monitor progress to establish if the Practice Recommendation is on schedule, falling behind or ahead of schedule. It will also enable PRONI to take remedial action where necessary to meet the 31 December 2025 deadline.	PRONI is dealing with a considerable backlog of over 320 complex requests, comprising over 100,000 pages of sensitive and graphic information. The requested information predominantly relates to the NI Troubles and PRONI recognises the completing these requests is a time consuming and difficult process. In order to comply with the deadline of 31 December 2025 as stated in the Practice Recommendation, PRONI must reduce the backlog by over 11,000 pages each month. This could relate to one request or dozens of requests. The timetable will allow PRONI to monitor progress to establish if the Practice Recommendation is on schedule, falling behind or ahead of schedule. It will also enable PRONI to take remedial action where necessary to meet the 31 December 2025 deadline.		High		Head of Branch		21 April 2025	31 December 2025	This work will be reviewed on monthly basis.	Ongoing
Technical - The tools and resources available to you	PRONI should investigate introducing a case management system to enable FOIA requests to be processed, monitored and updated appropriately and more efficiently.	PRONI's current systems for monitoring requests are outdated making it more time consuming to monitor requests and actively update the progress of requests. Operating a more user-friendly system will help to improve performance.	PRONI's current systems for monitoring requests are outdated making it more time consuming to monitor requests and actively update the progress of requests. Operating a more user-friendly system will help to improve performance.	Medium		Head of Branch		15 January 2025	31 March 2026	The requirement was highlighted in the recent organisational and strategic review of PRONI. Further actions to be implemented subject to funding becoming available.	Ongoing	
	Update PRONI's Access to Information guidance manuals. These manuals set out internal procedures for handling requests, defining routine and complex requests, consultation process, redaction policies and provide index of Responsible Authorities.	Ensure consistent approach on how requests are completed and enable requests to be issued for s66 FOIA consultation within designated timescales. This allows PRONI staff to complete requests efficiently and consult with the appropriate Responsible Authority as early as possible following receipt of request.	Ensure consistent approach on how requests are completed and enable requests to be issued for s66 FOIA consultation within designated timescales. This allows PRONI staff to complete requests efficiently and consult with the appropriate Responsible Authority as early as possible following receipt of request.		High		Head of Branch		15 January 2025	31 March 2025	All PRONI manuals are now updated. Manuals reviewed and updated on a monthly basis or when appropriate.	31 March 2025
	PRONI to store customer correspondence in the appropriate EDMS to enable appropriate staff to locate all relevant information quickly and easily.	Storing and recording customer correspondence according to NICS records management guidance will make it easier and quicker to share, collaborate on, and review information concerning specific requests.	Storing and recording customer correspondence according to NICS records management guidance will make it easier and quicker to share, collaborate on, and review information concerning specific requests.		High		Head of Branch		15 January 2025	Ongoing	Re-issued guidance to all staff about use of NICS EDMS to store all customer correspondence.	15 January 2025
	PRONI to ensure that relevant staff are log, update and close down requests on PRONI's correspondence system.	Vital that all steps of the FOIA process are recorded correctly to be able to demonstrate compliance with 30 day completion target. This will also enable PRONI to identify those requests which are close to the 30 day statutory time limit and which require urgent attention.	Vital that all steps of the FOIA process are recorded correctly to be able to demonstrate compliance with 30 day completion target. This will also enable PRONI to identify those requests which are close to the 30 day statutory time limit and which require urgent attention.		High		FOIA team leaders		20 September 2024	Ongoing	Staff received refresher training in September 2024. New staff joining team also receive training in this area. Staff also receive reminders at monthly team meetings.	Ongoing
Organisational - How your organisation as a whole can support this plan	Relevant PRONI staff to be trained on FOIA legislative requirements and processes to be followed to complete FOIA requests using internal and ICO training materials. PRONI to also seek guidance from Departmental Information Management Branch colleagues on completing requests when required.	To ensure that PRONI staff are trained in completing FOIA requests and can quickly access relevant user manuals and other training materials to complete requests. This will assist staff referring requests to the Responsible Authority as quickly as possible leading to improved performance.	To ensure that PRONI staff are trained in completing FOIA requests and can quickly access relevant user manuals and other training materials to complete requests. This will assist staff referring requests to the Responsible Authority as quickly as possible leading to improved performance.		High		Head of Branch		01 September 2024	Ongoing	Access to Information Training workshops delivered to all RMCAT staff. Staff training will continue as new staff join the FOIA team.	18-20 September 2024 and ongoing
	Engage constructively and proactively with Responsible Authorities concerning their identification as Responsible Authority for historical transferred records and agree roles and responsibilities for PRONI and the Responsible Authority.	PRONI is required under s15 and s66 to consult with Responsible Authority. It is important that measures are in place to share information safely and securely and that both parties are aware of the volume of information which will be consulted upon and which require consideration. This will also enable parties to allocate the appropriate level of resources needed to comply with the ICO s48 Practice Recommendation and ensure FOIA compliance.	PRONI is required under s15 and s66 to consult with Responsible Authority. It is important that measures are in place to share information safely and securely and that both parties are aware of the volume of information which will be consulted upon and which require consideration. This will also enable parties to allocate the appropriate level of resources needed to comply with the ICO s48 Practice Recommendation and ensure FOIA compliance.		High		Head of Branch		15 January 2025	Ongoing	PRONI has engaged effectively with Responsible Authorities following receipt of the s48 Practice Recommendation. Measures are being put in place to identify Responsible Authorities and begin the consultation process as quickly as possible to reduce any further delays.	Ongoing
	Devise and agree consultation plan with Responsible Authorities setting out roles and responsibilities and required timescales for consultation responses which should be complied with in order to achieve FOIA compliance.	This action will ensure that PRONI and the Responsible Authority are reminded of the legislative requirement to complete FOIA requests within specific timescales.	This action will ensure that PRONI and the Responsible Authority are reminded of the legislative requirement to complete FOIA requests within specific timescales.		High		Deputy Head of Branch		16 April 2025	Ongoing	This will be reviewed on a monthly basis to identify late consultation responses which may impact on PRONI's compliance with FOIA.	Ongoing
	Providing monthly progress reports to PRONI SMT and Departmental colleagues including Permanent Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Data Protection Officer outlining results and highlighting issues which may reduce compliance.	This will enable Senior officials within the Department to have greater strategic oversight of the measures being achieved by PRONI to return to FOIA Compliance.	This will enable Senior officials within the Department to have greater strategic oversight of the measures being achieved by PRONI to return to FOIA Compliance.		High		Deputy Head of Branch		16 April 2025	Ongoing	Monthly reports currently provided to PRONI SMT. This will be expanded to senior Departmental Officials to demonstrate progress.	Ongoing
	In accordance with Practice Recommendation, PRONI to publish action plan and provide quarterly updates about steps taken by PRONI to remove the backlog of FOIA requests by 31 December 2025.	Publishing this information will enable PRONI to demonstrate greater transparency by enabling PRONI's stakeholders and applicants to view the action plan and be better informed about the measures being taken by PRONI to reduce the backlog and the progress being achieved at the end of each quarter.	Publishing this information will enable PRONI to demonstrate greater transparency by enabling PRONI's stakeholders and applicants to view the action plan and be better informed about the measures being taken by PRONI to reduce the backlog and the progress being achieved at the end of each quarter.		High		Head of Branch		18 April 2025	Ongoing	PRONI has produced Action Plan setting out the measures to remove the backlog. PRONI will also produce quarterly reports one month after the quarter has ended to enable accurate statistical information to be included in report.	N/A