

<b>Lead topic: Government Reform Unit</b>	<b>Sub-topic: Freedom of Information</b>	<b>Contact: Evelyn O'Connor Ext: 5311</b>
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## **FAST FACTS**

- **A modernised, consolidated, restructured and more accessible Freedom of Information Act 2014 was introduced in October 2014, repealing the 1997 and 2003 FOI Acts.**
- **Throughout 2016 the FOI Central Policy Unit in the Department provided support and advice to citizens and to some 600 FOI bodies through its helpdesk, chaired 6 FOI Network meetings, presented at a number of conferences and training events, developed new guidelines and maintained and updated the content on the FOI website [[www.foi.gov.ie](http://www.foi.gov.ie)].**
- **Furthermore, to support the proper functioning of FOI, a multi-supplier framework continued to operate providing consistent and appropriate training to FOI Officers, decision makers and internal reviewers. A total of 99 contracts were awarded to end year 2016 with approximately 5,488 participants trained under this framework arrangement.**

## **Q&A'S**

### What public bodies are covered by the FOI Act?

- The Act extends FOI to all public bodies, unless specifically exempt. As new public bodies are established, they will automatically be subject to FOI unless specifically exempt.

### What training is available for public body staff?

- A total of 99 contracts were awarded to end year 2016 with approximately 5,488 participants trained under this framework arrangement.
- A single FOI Training Framework was established in December 2014. This provides a panel of trainers from which FOI bodies can procure quality-assured training in a consistent and cost-effective manner. The FOI Central Policy Unit monitors the training to ensure consistency in standards, approach and core messages.

What other supports are in place?

- The FOI Central Policy Units FOI website ([www.foi.gov.ie](http://www.foi.gov.ie)) is a valuable resource for both public bodies and the general public and will continue to be enhanced in the coming months.
- A Code of Practice has been introduced which seeks to bring about greater efficiency, consistency and promote best practice in the operation of FOI throughout public bodies when dealing with FOI requests
- [Manuals, Guidance Notes and sample letters to assist public bodies have been reviewed and revised in line with the Act.](#)
- Existing FOI Networks are being supported and new FOI Networks established, these provide an excellent means of sharing learning and expertise, assisting in the development of common approaches and facilitating the transfer of learning between FOI bodies.