



HM CPSI

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FOI Request – Meta records for prosecution related statistics

Thank you for your Freedom of Information received on 7th April. In your request you asked for the following information.

Request

Therefore, under the FOIA, I respectfully request that you give me a full description of and technical information about all bulk data sources ("relevant data") that

a) are reasonably likely to assist me in compiling, by my own additional efforts, any part of my stated database plan, or

b) are otherwise reasonably relevant to my stated research interests.

This includes any such information available or known to you, regardless of whether you would hold the relevant data. I will follow up separately with whoever does hold it, and would like to have all information that would assist me in doing so. I understand and accept that your information about others' data is not definitive and may be inaccurate — and I request it anyway, as I believe it would be informative.

This also includes any such information about relevant data where the data is already publicly available — both as signposting, and because you likely have additional unpublished information which would make the publicly available data substantially more useful.

Limitations and clarifications

*Please note that this request does not ask for the actual content of any data sources (but, as below, does cover manuals, technical documentation, and similar descriptive information). In this request, I simply want to understand what data is available — with particularity enough to assess its utility for my research, how to limit your costs, how I may need to integrate multiple data sources, etc. In particular, my intent now is **not** to request the underlying raw data; I will request it in future after first understanding what is available and any considerations that would best optimise the effectiveness of that request.*

Consistent with the second paragraph of my request, I specifically request that you not delegate this request to other entities if doing so would cause your costs of response to exceed the reasonable limit. If the relevant data is not held by you, please limit your response to your own knowledge or records — though this includes your knowledge/records about others' data.

I particularly request that your response cover, to the best of your knowledge and records you hold,

A. any relevant data which is stored in a bulk-processable database format, including technical formats such as SQL, JSON, CSV, etc and statistical or research formats such as created by R, MATLAB, etc.;

B. any relevant data which was compiled for any similar research (e.g. the data actually used as input by the researchers, not just the derivatives thereof which are the outcomes of that research);

C. details of relevant data's database/spreadsheet format, structure, enums, query functionality (for FOIA purposes), content, data quality, coverage, limitations, etc., to assist me in understanding what is obtainable within the reasonable costs limit that would best serve my research interests;

and conditionally:

D. if you know of any other entities that hold relevant data for the purposes of the FOIA (even if you also hold the data):

i. the identity of the entity

ii. what data you believe that entity holds iii. what you believe that entity names that data, where you believe it would likely be found or filed, and any other information you have that would aid me in requesting (or aid that entity in finding) that data

E. if you do hold relevant data for the purposes of the FOIA, or if you would be a source of any exemption (even if held by another entity):

a description of any concerns or blanket exemptions which would likely be raised against release under the FOIA, including what parts of what data would be affected to what degree (considering e.g. the options of partial release, release only in certain aggregates, release with randomly altered or hashed data so as to protect privacy without altering statistical analyses, etc);

N.b. on this item: I of course do not expect you to commit to any particular decision as to a future request. Rather, I am asking you to assist me in anticipating and understanding any concerns likely to be arise, and possible mitigations to allay them.

F. to the extent it would stay within the reasonable costs limit while answering the above:

i. all meta documentation — technical documentation, manuals, data quality assessments, usage notes, data schema, or the like — about the relevant data, particularly documents that are primarily used by researchers, statisticians, or database administrators ii. if providing the meta documentation requested in the preceding paragraph would exceed the reasonable costs limit, then instead please provide as much information about such meta documentation as you can while staying within the costs limit — e.g. document titles, authoring bodies/teams, linked data sets, number of pages/bytes, format, date/revision, location within your system of records, and the like

Form and format

If a responsive record is already publicly available online, I request that you please provide a direct link to it and reference to the section (e.g. paragraph #, page #, text snippet) that addresses this.

If it is not, I request that you please provide it in its original, native, electronic format, as stored on your computer system.

Likely sources of responsive information

I appreciate that this request likely appears complex. However, I do not here actually request a large number of records, nor from a large number of teams.

My expectation is that you maintain only a few databases with relevant data, each of which will have some schema and descriptions as well as a handful of meta documents. I likewise expect that all information I request here is held by only a couple teams — namely, your research/statistics team, and your IT/database management team. They too are the ones I believe most likely to know about other sources of relevant data.

I expect that other researchers, both internal and external, will have conducted closely related analyses before — and therefore that you likely already have all the information requested already collected. What I requested is what any researcher or statistician would need to know — for properly citing, differentiating, or analysing prior work; assessing whether they can answer a question put to them; discovering new research possibilities; formulating a research plan and writing the sources, methods, & background sections of a publication; merging and normalising raw data into a useful format; compiling and analysing their work; and obtaining peer review.

In short, it is just the basic necessities for anyone beginning a research project in this area.

CPSI vs CPS

"You" in this request means CPSI, not CPS.

I understand that CPSI and CPS are separate entities. I am also making a substantially identical request to CPS.

This request is specifically made to CPSI, because I believe your core functions as an inspectorate are likely to have resulted in you having compiled, researched, audited, reported upon, or otherwise dealt with relevant data in ways that CPS itself may not have done.

Closing

As I do not know what relevant data is potentially available, my request is stated broadly. This is primarily a request for your advice and assistance — in making a future FOI request, and in understanding data sets that would be most beneficial to my research. As this is a core public function under s. 16 FOIA, I trust that you will interpret it accordingly.

If responding to this request would exceed your reasonable costs limit despite all the limitations above, please provide a specific proposal for a modification of my request which would not exceed the limit while being most beneficial to my stated objectives (to the best of your judgment) — i.e. if you would otherwise give a denial on the basis of costs, please instead give me a clarifying response to which I can simply say "yes, I agree with your proposed revision" without having to guess at what is or isn't reasonably feasible for you.

I can confirm that we do not hold any information in the scope of this request.

As part of our duty to provide advice and assistance I can tell you that all data that HMCPSI collects in relation to an inspection, is destroyed on publication of the report. Our inspection reports do include some data that may be useful to your research. Under exemption 21, we do not have to supply this to you as this

information is accessible by other means ie on our website and the link is attached.
[HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate - Home \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk)

If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our response to your request, please send full details within two calendar months of the date of this email and send to the below email address:

info@HMCPsi.gov.uk

You also have the right to ask the Information Commissioner to investigate any aspect of your complaint. Please note that the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is likely to expect the internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning an investigation.