



Information Commissioner's Office
Promoting public access to official information
and protecting your personal information

Press Release

For immediate release

Date: 1 January 2008

Freedom of information - three years on

There has been a sharp increase over the last three years in the number of people who consider that the Freedom of Information Act is delivering significant benefits, according to research by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The findings show that just three years after the Act was introduced eight out of ten individuals now have more confidence in public authorities because of freedom of information, compared with only half of individuals when the Act came into force in 2005. Over 80% of individuals questioned felt that being able to access information held by public authorities promotes accountability and transparency, a significant rise from just 58% in 2005.

Almost nine out of ten of individuals feel that the Freedom of Information Act has increased their knowledge of public authorities. The research showed that support for the Act among public authorities is also increasing - some 88% of public authorities believe that freedom of information is needed, compared to 82% last year.

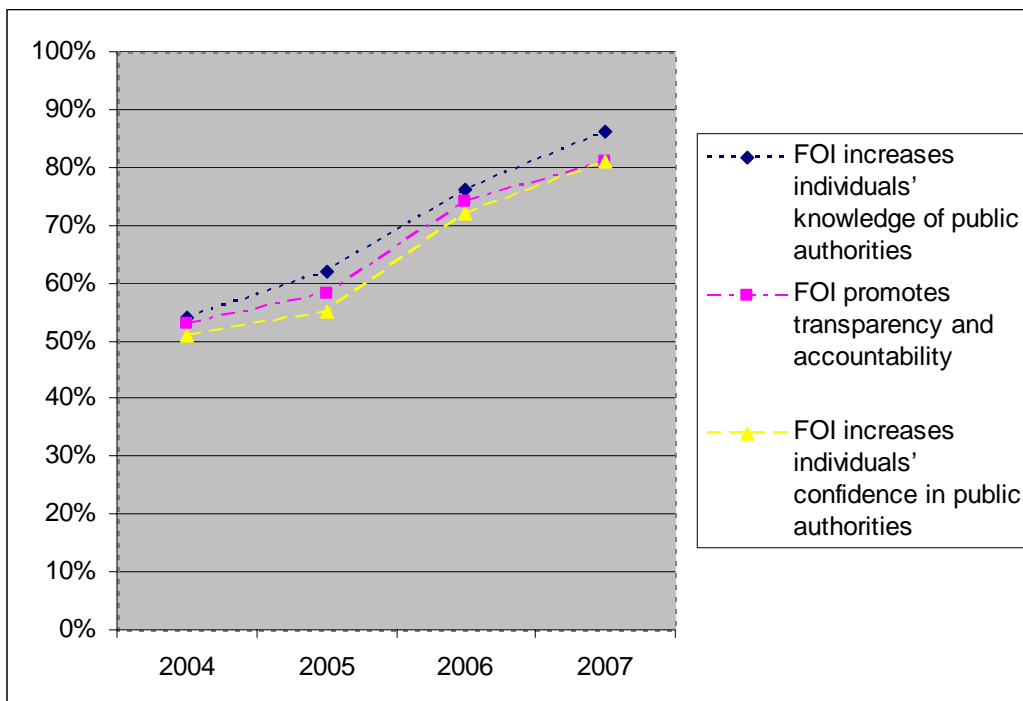
Information Commissioner, Richard Thomas, said: "I am delighted that so many individuals now recognise the benefits of the Freedom of Information Act. After three years it is clear freedom of information is now part of the mainstream of democratic life and is having a positive impact.

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If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner's press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: www.ico.gov.uk

Individuals' views on the benefits of the Freedom of Information Act

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Being able to access information held by public authorities increases your knowledge of what they do	54%	62%	76%	86%
Being able to access information held by public authorities promotes their accountability and transparency	53%	58%	74%	81%
Being able to access information held by public authorities increases your confidence in them	51%	55%	72%	81%
Being able to access information held by public authorities increases your trust in them	51%	57%	69%	72%



Notes to Editors

1. The full research is available at www.ico.gov.uk. The research, using a sample of 1000 people, was conducted by SMSR Ltd of Kingston upon Hull. A full breakdown of the methodology is available
2. The Information Commissioner promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
3. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.ico.gov.uk