

Report to:	QSMTM Q4
Report by:	Helen Gardner- Swift, Head of Corporate Services (HOCS) Liz Brown, Finance and Administration Manager (FAM)
Meeting Date:	11 May 2022
Subject/ Title:	Enquiries Service Statistics Report VC168485
Attached Papers	N/A

Purpose of report

- This Committee Report (CR) is required under the Key Document C1 Governance Reporting Arrangements and its purpose is to inform the Senior Management Team (SMT) of the Enquiries Service Statistics for 2021-22.

Recommendation and actions

- I recommend that:
 - the SMT notes the CR
 - this CR is published in full as set out in paragraph 26

Executive summary

- This report covers the following:
 - the numbers of enquiries received in 2021-22 with comparative figures for 2020-21 and 2019-20.
 - the outcome of enquiries in 2021-22, with comparative figures for 2020-21.
 - analyses the number of enquiries responded to within the timescales set down in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the Performance and Quality Framework 2021-22, with comparative figures for 2020-21.

Enquiries received

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
2019-20	341	344	336	262	1,283
2020-21	177	317	172	194	860
2021-22	178	208	137	160	683

- The total number of Enquiries received in 2021-22 is 21% lower than in 2020-21 and 47% lower than in 2019-20.

Enquiries closed by outcome

	2020-21		2021-22 Q1/Q2	2021-22 Q3/Q4	2021-22 total	
Making / responding to a	248	29%	143	115	258	37%

request/request for review/appeal						
DPA / FOIA / UK EIRs referrals to ICO	113	13%	59	64	123	18%
Not an FOI issue	74	9%	39	23	62	9%
Referred to other SIC website content	48	6%	29	19	48	7%
No response needed	46	5%	26	20	46	7%
Assessing or improving practice	9	1%	15	7	22	5%
Body under jurisdiction	29	3%	14	11	25	4%
Submitting statistics to the portal	162	19%	12	5	17	2%
Signposted to another body	14	2%	8	7	15	2%
Missing code	26	3%	7	7	14	2%
Publication scheme - advice	12	1%	7	2	9	1%
Sent Word appeal form	0	0%	7	2	9	1%
Appeal portal	34	4%	7	0	7	1%
Sent YRTK	6	1%	5	1	6	1%
Governance/finance/resources	6	1%	1	4	5	3%
Other assistance given	15	2%	3	1	4	
SAR/RFI consultation			1	2	3	
Press: request for comment/statement/interview	15	2%	2	1	3	
Other	1	0%	0	2	2	
Intervention general enquiry	0	0%	0	2	2	
Request for training	2	0%	1	0	1	
FOISA / EI(S)Rs / INSPIRE	3	0%	0	1	1	
Publication scheme/Gtl	1	0%	0	0	0	
Intervention specific case	0	0%	0	0	0	
TOTAL	864	100%	386	306	682	100%

- 1 enquiry was open at the end of the 2020-21 reporting year but is now closed and included in the Q1/Q2 figures above.
- There were 2 enquiries open as at 31 March 2022.
- Statistics portal enquiries in 2021-22 are down to normal levels after the peak in 2020-21 caused by login and questionnaire queries from public authorities when they had to move to remote working quickly.
- The reduction in statistics portal queries have moved the percentages of other types of enquires back to levels from previous years - there may have been less enquiries in 2021-22 but the percentage split between outcomes has reverted to more normal levels.
- The number of enquiries dealt with by each team is set out in the table below:

Corporate Services		Enforcement		Policy & Information	
264	39%	314	46%	105	15%

Response times

- This report analyses the number of enquiries responded to within the timescales set down in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the Key Document C7 Performance and Quality Framework 2021-22 which are:
 - 90% to be responded to within 5 working days or fewer
 - 95% to be responded to within 20 working days or fewer.

	2020-21 Total			2021-22 Total		
	No	%		No	%	
≤ 5 days	834	96.53%	96.53%	670	98.24%	98.18%
> 5 days / ≤ 20 days	27	3.43%	99.66%	12	1.76%	100%
> 20 days	3	0.34%	100%	0	0.00%	-
TOTAL	864			682		

11. Both KPIs have been met in 2021-22.

COVID-19 pandemic

12. Our priority as an organisation has been to continue to provide key services and guidance within available resource while safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of our members of staff.
13. Since temporarily closing our office premises on 23 March 2020 and putting in place business continuity arrangements, we have maintained operational output within the constraints imposed by limitations on access to our office premises. We have been able to respond to enquiries sent to us by email or by post and enquiries continue to be managed, as far as possible, in line with the relevant procedures. The office premises re-opened on 3 May 2022 and a gradual return to working in the office premises is now underway. A phone message, relating to an enquiry, can be left on our general office phone number, will be picked up by the Corporate Services Team (CST) and the related details forwarded to the relevant officer for response. As the hybrid working system develops, HOCS and the CST will be considering how telephone enquiries can be handled.

Risk impact

14. We have policies and procedures providing guidance on how to respond to enquiries to ensure that such requests are appropriately managed and responded to. These policies and procedures mitigate against the risk of not complying with our duties and responsibilities.
15. This CR contributes towards the control measures aimed at reducing the likelihood and impact of risk relating to information governance and data protection.
16. This CR also helps us to monitor and report on organisational outcomes and helps us to mitigate the risk of not performing our statutory functions and duties to a high standard.
17. The business continuity measures that have been, and continue to be, in place, mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Equalities impact

18. The enquiries service is one of the main points of contact for this organisation and we aim to ensure that no one is unlawfully discriminated against when using this service.
19. The impact of the interim restriction of the service to email and postal enquiries, whilst the office premises were temporarily closed, has been, and continues to be, monitored (as far as possible).

Privacy impact

20. There is no direct privacy impact arising from this report.

Resources impact

21. As this area of work falls with “business as usual”, the work required is undertaken within current resources.

Operational/strategic plan impact

22. The management and reporting on the Enquiries Service is classed as “business as usual” in the Operational Plan 2021-22.

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

23. None.

Consultation and Communication

24. QSMTM Q4 minute.

25. An Enquiries report will be included in the Annual Report 2021-22.

Publication

26. I recommend that this CR is published in full.