



ADVISORY COUNCIL ON NATIONAL RECORDS AND ARCHIVES

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

February 2009

1 This paper provides more detailed information on the work of Freedom of Information Advisory Panels since the November Advisory Council meeting. It notes the queries of Panels where they have sought clarification about the public interest test applied by a department and/or have advised that the public interest favours disclosure.

2 Attached, as requested by the Council, are tables showing the total volume of Freedom of Information requests received by The National Archives during the period from October to December 2008 relating both to material subsequently released and to exempt material and the number of applications to which each of the exemptions was applied in the above period.

3 Since November the Council has convened 6 Panels. They have advised on a total of 40 cases relating to 48 records in total.

Cases considered by Panels

2 The cases that the Panels advised on fell into 4 categories:

i) 19 cases assessed the likely risk of mental or physical endangerment to living individuals (s38); primarily gruesome forensic photographs of murder victims, details of sexual murders and the identity of informants.

ii) 16 cases considered sensitivities that would prejudice law enforcement such as unsolved murders and the identity of informants (s31). Due to the distressing nature of some of the unsolved murders, s38 (Health and Safety) was also applied to 10 of these cases.

iii) 12 concerned the risk of damage to international relations (s27)

iv) 1 case related to defence issues (s26)