

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

A brief history

FOIMan Infographic

WORLDWIDE



1766

Sweden becomes first country to introduce a law providing access to information

1966

FOI laws become mainstream with US FOI Act, followed by other countries over several decades: by 2015, 100 countries have FOI laws

UK



1979

Clement Freud, a Liberal MP, tries to get his Official Information Bill made law in exchange for his support in confidence vote

2000

Freedom of Information Act receives Royal Assent, coming fully into force on 1 January 2005. Scottish Act and Environmental Information Regulations come into force the same day

2010

First successful attempt to weaken FOI as Constitutional Reform and Governance Act creates absolute exemption for communications with monarch and two closest heirs

2012

Protection of Freedoms Act amends FOI Act, introducing new dataset re-use rules

Justice Select Committee review of Act concludes it "has been a significant enhancement of our democracy."

2015

FOI Commission set up to look at FOI's impact on government "safe space", public interest balance and cost of FOI