

March 15th 2018

BY EMAIL

Tel: 028 9536 3863
Email: FOI.BSO@hscni.net

Our Ref: FOI 855

Dear 

Your request for information was received on 22 February 2018 by the Business Services Organisation ('The BSO') and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('The Act').

The Freedom of Information Act (2000) states that a public body, such as the BSO, may apply charges in order to provide information to the public. If a public body spends more than £450 on staff time in complying with a request, then charges may be applied; this figure is based on an hourly rate of £25 over 18 hours. Please refer to sections 12 and 13 of The Act, and sections 3 and 4 of The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 ('The Fees Regulations') for further information.

The BSO has estimated that it will take 227.5 hours to comply with your request, which comes to £5687.50.

The reasons for this fee are detailed below the various elements of your FOI request.

1. The total number of contracts that BSO PaLS has issued in the last 5 years.

During this 5 year period the Tendering Systems within NI Public Sector changed. Information prior to September 2015 needs to be manually obtained. This involves locating, retrieving and extracting the information from records. A sample, chosen in accordance with the ICO Guidance identified that this exercise will take 96.75 hours (rounded to nearest 15 mins) to complete equating to £2418.75.

2. In the last 5 years the number of contracts where the Contract Price is fixed for a minimum of 12 months.

3. In the last 5 years the number of contracts where the Contract Price is fixed for a minimum of 24 months.

4. In the last 5 years the number of contracts where the Contract Price is fixed for a minimum of 36 months.



5. In the last 5 years the number of contracts where the Contract Price is fixed for the duration of the initial contract period.

This information is contained within tender/quotation documents. It can only be obtained by a visual check of each tender/quotation file. This this will involve locating, retrieving and extracting the information from records. A sample in accordance with ICO Guidance has been selected. This exercise will take 130.75 hours (rounded to the nearest 15 minutes) to complete equating to £3268.75.

We are unable to continue processing your request until the fee is paid. If you wish the BSO to continue to process your request you should pay the fee within 3 months (i.e. 15/06/2018). If the BSO does not receive payment of the fee by this date, the request will be considered closed.

If you narrow the scope of your request, we may be able to provide the information free of charge because it would cost less than the appropriate limit to do so. For instance, you may wish to narrow your request by being more specific about what information you wish to obtain, including dates or period of time relevant to the information required.

For example, in this case you may wish to refine point 1 of the request to include the number of contracts BSO PaLS has issued since September 2015 and in points 2 – 5 narrow to a representative 6 month period. Please contact BSO corporate services if either of these suggestions would assist your information request requirements.

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to

Information Governance Manager,
2 Franklin Street,
Belfast,
BT2 8DQ

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

Website: www.ico.org.uk
Phone: 0303 123 1113
Email: casework@ico.org.uk
Post: Information Commissioner's Office
3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place

Belfast
BT7 2JB

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liam McIvor', written in a cursive style.

Liam McIvor
Chief Executive