

8 September 2023

BY EMAIL

Our Ref: FOI 1993

Dear 

Your request for information was received on 26th June 2023 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested in relation to processes within the BSO Payroll Shared Services Centre (PSC).

Firstly, please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in providing you with a formal response.

Please find this information below:

1.Can the BSO please clarify do financial audits occur in the Health Service for all Permanent, Temporary and Bank staff? If so, how frequently do these audits occur?

Annual “payments to staff” audits take place in each Health and Social Care (HSC) Organisation’s Finance Department and bi-annual payroll audits take place within the BSO PSC by both internal HSC auditors, as well as external Northern Ireland Audit Office auditors.

2. Can the BSO please clarify when the Online Payroll Query Form was launched in Health & Social Care in Northern Ireland and when it was launched how was this communicated to all staff across the Health & Social Care sector? How is it also communicated routinely to new and current staff for example in HSC Trust announcements; staff inductions etc?



The PSC's online query form was launched in June 2019. A Regional Communication Strategy was devised, where Launch Details were shared at numerous regional meetings with communications supplied to each trust to cascade through their organisation. Other methods utilised during launch included Inductions, Meetings with Trade Unions, PSC Email Signatures and Telephone IVR.

As part of the PSC's Business as Usual Practice, the online form details are included on the email signatures, attached to all correspondence and is also imparted on the PSC interactive voice response telephone service.

3. In respect of the overpayment errors in the HSC system, what is the breakdown of the rationale of the nature of these errors for example; system errors; data input error etc

Overpayments can be due to a number of reasons, namely, incorrect information supplied to Payroll, information not supplied to Payroll, an error in Payroll processing or as a result of a system issue.

4. Can you please clarify is there a safety alert in operation on the payroll system that flags on the internal payroll system if an employee has been overpaid more than their expected wage?

Normal fluctuations in pay may occur due to additional hours and enhancements therefore there is not necessarily an 'expected wage'. However, a number of pre-closedown variance checks do take place within the PSC to ensure that fluctuations in values are within pre-agreed tolerances. This work is used to identify where there may be potential overpayments, and these are investigated fully.

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, as the BSO, along with all other public authorities are not obliged to accept internal review requests after this period has lapsed.

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 cursive script that reads "Karen Bailey".

Karen Bailey
Chief Executive