

21st October 2021**BY EMAIL**
**Our Ref: FOI 1514**Dear ,

Your request for information was received on 25th June 2021 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested with regards to ICT Expenditure.

Please accept my apologies for the delay in providing you with a response.

I must advise that this information is considered exempt from disclosure via Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('Cost') as it is estimated that the cost of complying with this request would exceed the 'appropriate limit'.

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 FOIA, 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.

I should explain that the BSO currently has 271 systems and services supported, some of which have hundreds of interfaces. In order to provide the information required, staff would need to spend approximately 2 hours with each of the system owners and other additional staff to fully understand which interfaces form part of a managed service, in order to exclude them. This information is not held in a central location, and thus a simple reference/extraction exercise is not possible.

Following on from this, it would be necessary to engage with all relevant stakeholders to ascertain how much external IT consultancy support they have used in the past year.



The BSO has therefore estimated that it would take a minimum of 570 hours to undertake these tasks in order to provide you with a full response. In line with The Fees Regulations, this equates to an indicative cost of £14,250, with a fee therefore of £13,800.

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 of the date of this letter. 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, and in keeping with BSO's duty to provide assistance under Section 16 of FOIA, if you are specific about the type of system they need information about then above figure may be reduced, although the BSO at this stage cannot provide any assurance that such refinement would fall within the appropriate limit.

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,

Karen Bailey

Karen Bailey
Acting Chief Executive