



# HM TREASURY

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Information Rights Unit

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Ref: 10/295

Re: Freedom of Information Act 2000: COINS DATABASE

Thank you for your enquiry dated 11 April 2010, varying your request of 19 February. I am treating your requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

2. You asked -

*Please send me 23 complete records from the COINS database. These 23 records should:*

- *Be listed with all their eight dimensions;*
- *Not include anything to do with the Security Services, anything defence related, or related to trading funds or public funded entities such as the BBC;*
- *Not include any future year data subject to Government and Parliamentary revision;*
- *Be drawn from at least 5 different years;*
- *Be selected from at least 5 different departments;*
- *Include at least 5 records each with value below £5,000, and 5 records each with a value above £50,000;*

*If disclosure of the data identifiers or variable names associated to these records are considered exempt under section 43(1) (trade secrets) or section 43(3) (commercial confidentiality), please provide:*

- *Equivalent names and/or descriptors of these fields;*
- *The length (numbers of characters) of the original redacted identifiers;*
- *A statement from the commercial supplier of this software (Descisys) proclaiming that these identifiers actually are commercially sensitive.*

*Please contact me if these selection criteria need to be varied slightly for convenience. I would be surprised if it was difficult to disclose one millionth of this data set.*

3. The definition of a "complete record" is unclear from the request. It is possible to define the term "complete record" in a number of different ways based on the differing sub-types of data held on COINS, and the different ways that data are recorded and updated/maintained. Without that clarity of definition, it is not possible to identify what data may or may not fall within the criteria you have specified, or even if it is held in that way. To be helpful, much of the data recorded on COINS cover multiple years, including historic, current and future years. Given what is in effect your exclusion of current and future years data, it would mean that "records" including such years as well as historic years would not be included against your request, as they could not then represent a "complete record", given any definition of the term.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

4. We would point out that COINS is not an accounting or ERP system, and as such does not hold what could be described as transactional data, for example of the type associated with the payment of invoices to suppliers.

5. Given the above, we do not believe that we hold the information requested in the format implied by the request. Nor do we believe that we have a report available that would allow the specific and exact identification and extraction of the data requested, assuming they were releasable and we had a clear understanding of the specifics of the request, including a definition of "complete record".

6. Even if your request were clarified, and we were able to identify that the data were held in the format you have specified, I would reiterate the key element of our reply of 29 March. We consider that data would engage exemptions, and given your stated criteria, that in this case information would be "other data" and be exempt under section 36(2)(c). For convenience, I summarise below the previously advised exemptions covering all COINS data:

- data relating to the Security Services are exempt under section 23(1);
- data identifiers that are likely to engage intellectual property rights; and current/future years figures which are commercially sensitive to government, for example data on trading funds or public funded entities such as the BBC – in both respects are considered to be exempt under section 43(1) and 43(2) respectively;
- select data relating to the defence services that is likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of any relevant forces, are exempt under section 26(1)(b);
- current and future years data, which is subject to Government and Parliamentary revision, is exempt under section 35(1)(a);
- other data are exempt under section 36(2)(c).

7. If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. It will be helpful to us if you remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.



Paul Morran  
Information Rights Unit

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

If you are not happy with this reply, you may request a review by writing to HM Treasury, Information Rights Unit, 2/S2, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ.

Email [FOI.responses@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:FOI.responses@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk)

Any review request must be made within 2 months of the date of this letter.

It would assist our review if you set out which aspects of the reply concern you and why you are dissatisfied.

If you are not content with the outcome your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Treasury. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.