



HM TREASURY

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21 July 2010

Information Rights Unit

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www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

FOI.responses@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk

Ref: 10/579

Alfred Swales

By email:

Request-40292-181e241d@whatdotheyknow.com

Re: Freedom of Information Act 2000: Spending Challenge

Thank you for your enquiry dated 30 June requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked for information covering –

- *how many public sector workers have actually been contacted for the Spending Challenge?*
- *what form of communication is being used for this exercise?*
- *what is the cost?*
- *have obvious savings such as charging for FOI requests been considered?*

In relation to your first point, the Head of the Home Civil Service wrote an open letter to all staff urging them to contribute to the Public Sector consultation process. In the Treasury this message was distributed by emailing to all staff. Other government organisations may have distributed the message in a different way. It is doubtful that any organisation would have resorted to paper mailing, but we do not have that information.

An online form was used to gather Public Sector staff suggestions. The same online platform is now being used for the wider public engagement exercise, launched on 8th July, at an overall cost of around £10,000.

Some of the results of the Public Sector engagement exercise have been published on the Treasury website here –

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spend_challenge_ideas_1.htm

The government is open to all ideas for potential savings. The consideration process will extend to the end of the summer.

In relation to the charging for Freedom of Information requests, the Act does in fact provide for certain costs to be recouped from requesters. The previous administration considered changes to the regime to increase charges; although some commentators viewed that as undemocratic, and the proposals were not implemented. The Treasury itself opts not to levy charges, simply because the costs of administering the charging would be disproportionate to the level of receipts.



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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

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.

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