



William Perrin

By email: request-165905-fda07fc4@whatdotheyknow.com

18 July 2013

Your FOI request ref FOI004-0115

Dear Mr Perrin

Thank you for your email of the 22 June 2013, in which you requested information regarding the Big Lottery Fund (the Fund). We have treated your request under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA").

You have requested a description of our information system(s) for historic grant information and for the data fields that our system holds in relation to grantees.

We currently use a bespoke Oracle database system within which our data is spread spread across 400+ tables in eight schemas, with a lot of data fields held as metadata.

Over the next few months we plan to introduce a new funding management system which is designed to make the experience of applying for and managing funding clearer, simpler and more efficient.

Because there is such a large amount of data within our system we emailed you on the 2 July 2013 to ask you to contact us so that we were able to understand and fulfil your request better, but as yet we have not heard back from you.

Although the deadline to respond to your request can be paused whilst we await clarification, in the meantime we have provided a list of fields from our reporting system which we use to extract data about our grants. These fields capture data about the applicant organisation as well as the project, costs and beneficiaries.

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UK Chair
Peter Ainsworth

Acting Chief Executive
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We are committed to bringing real improvements to communities and to the lives of people most in need





We have not included the reporting fields that relate to our assessment and administration processes as these do not appear to be the areas in which you are interested.

We have not released the reporting fields that relate to our investigative reporting. We have withheld these under section 31 of the FOIA.

Section 31(1)(a) states:

31(1) Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under the Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice-

(a) the prevention and detection of crime.

We strongly believe that the release of this information is likely to prejudice the prevention and detection of crime. If we were to release the withheld recording fields then members of the public would have access to our risk processes and could potentially circumvent them. This would seriously jeopardize our ability to protect public money.

Section 31 (1)(a) is a qualified exemption. We have considered whether in all circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

We acknowledge that there is a strong public interest in the Fund being open and transparent about the information we hold about our applicants and grant holders. Disclosure of this information would promote accountability within Fund and also assure the public that there are strong measures in place to reduce risk and fraud.

However we believe that there is a stronger public interest in us being able to protect public money. Once information has been released under the provisions of the FOIA it becomes a public document. Disclosure of the withheld information would result in members of the public having access to our risk processes, which could lead to these processes being circumvented by unscrupulous members of the public. If disclosure of the withheld information led to greater levels of fraud, there would be less money available to honest applicants, charities and voluntary sector groups.



We are committed to considering options to make more of our data readily available to the public. We are specifically looking to publish the data underpinning the Fund's research and evaluation work and consult with stakeholders to identify sources of data that can be made available as open data sets. We also intend help raise the profile of open data within the VCS sector and encourage organisations to maximise the value of open data that is available.

We'd be very keen to discuss our approach to Open Data with you. If you are interested in this, or the information that we have provided to you does not meet your needs please contact me in to discuss further.

If you have any further queries regarding the FOIA please contact me at the address below. Your reference is: **FOI004-0115**. It would be helpful if you could quote this reference in any future correspondence.

If you are unhappy with the level of service you have received in relation to your request, you may ask for an internal review. If this is the case, contact me and I will arrange for the decision to be reviewed.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Felton".

Melissa Felton
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Big Lottery Fund
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