

T: 0131-244 5510
E: Dominic.Munro@gov.scot

Your ref: Internal review of Freedom of Information request - 2011 Spending Review & The Equalities Act

Our ref: Fol/18/01253

October 2018

Dear

Thank you for your letters of 8 May and 17 September 2018 in which you request an internal review of Scottish Government's handling of your request of 30 April 2018, Fol/18/01253, in which you requested the following, under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA):

- “I now request to be directed to recorded information that shows since the spending review in 2011 equal and parallel opportunities for all regardless of background, age or barriers into participation & achievement have not been removed.
- Please supply in electronic format recorded information and/unambiguous links to this request elsewhere in the public domain”.

Regarding your letter of 8 May 2018, I am afraid due to an oversight by Scottish Government officials your request of 8 May 2018 was not actioned. I must apologise for this oversight and regret that the handling of your request has fallen below our usual high standards.

Regarding your letter of 17 September 2018 in which you again request an internal review of Scottish Government's handling of your request of 30 April 2018, a review is not appropriate at this stage as we at Scottish Government required further clarification from you before being able to provide you with a response.

Returning to your original question, and as stated in our letter of 3 May 2018, whilst our aim is to provide information whenever possible, in this instance your request was very broad and unspecific and consequently the costs of locating, retrieving and providing the information requested for material regarding the ‘2011 Spending Review & The Equalities

Act' would exceed the upper cost limit of £600 due to the volume of searches required across a number of areas of Scottish Government. As you did not respond to this request for clarification, we closed it, consistent with practice for handling Freedom of Information requests. FOISA allows up to 40 working days for an applicant to provide a response to a request for clarification and this time elapsed.

If you still wish to pursue this request then we would invite you to submit a new, more specific request for information. As advised above your initial request was very broad and unspecific therefore if you were to resubmit the same request it is very likely that it would again be refused on cost grounds.

To help a new request fall within the £600 threshold, I would suggest that you consider narrowing the scope of your request, perhaps by specifying which particular areas of Scottish Government you would be most interested in? For example, the information relating to your enquiry is held by the following areas of the Scottish Government that might be relevant to you:

Modern Apprenticeships unit
Further & Higher Education unit
Universities unit
Equalities unit
General employability unit

This would help to limit the number of searches we would be required to complete and may help the request fall within the upper cost limit. It may also be helpful to reduce the timeframe of your request as your original request has asked for information spanning 7 years. Reducing the timeframe would also help the request to fall within the upper cost limit.

You may also find it helpful to look at the Scottish Information Commissioner's 'Tips for requesting information under FOI and the EIRs' on his website at:
<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Tipsforrequesters.aspx>.

In view of the delay in responding to your original request I can assure you that should you wish to submit a new request on this subject we will ensure that it is treated as a matter of urgency.

Once again I apologise for any inconvenience caused by this delay and assure you that Scottish Government is committed to providing FOI information whenever possible.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact me directly quoting the original case number FOI/18/01253.

Yours sincerely



DOMINIC MUNRO
Director