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Sam Reed  
By email: [request-677566-36f34895@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-677566-36f34895@whatdotheyknow.com)

Our ref: FOI2020/18806  
6 August 2020

Dear Sam Reed,

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Accessibility Expenditure**

Thank you for your request for information of 16 July 2020 about accessibility expenditure over the last three years. We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Your information request and our response are set out below:

*Please can you provide the total spend on accessibility testing, accessibility audits and disabled user testing carried out within your department broken down by supplier for the last three years.*

*Please can you also provide a breakdown of all spend for the last three years with the following organisations: AbilityNet, Dig Inclusion Ltd, Digital Accessibility Centre Limited (DAC), React Accessibility Recite Me Ltd, Test Partners Ltd, Tetralogical, The Accessible Digital Documents Company Ltd, Shaw Trust Accessibility Services, Zimo Accessibility, Open Inclusion, Hassell Inclusion, SimpleUsability Axaccessibility Ltd, Hex Productions AccessEquals, Able AI.*

We want to be as open as possible in answering requests for information. The FOIA itself also requires us to provide reasonable advice and assistance to those seeking to make such a request. Unfortunately, your request is very broad and could cover an enormous amount of information, going back three years. Gathering it together would therefore involve a significant cost and diversion of resources from the Department's other work.

It may be helpful to explain why your request would involve a significant cost. The department's finance system does not have categories of spend for 'accessibility testing', 'accessibility audits', 'disabled user testing' or anything closely related. It is therefore not possible to readily identify any such expenditure. Investigations into a large number of potential areas of expenditure would be required to manually identify if any can be considered in scope for answering your request. The department has around 6,200 purchase orders open as of 1 July 2020. To investigate each of these for one minute would take 103 hours of staff time. Furthermore, we would need to look at closed purchase orders to identify expenditure stretching back over the last three years.

Section 12(1) of the FOIA allows us to refuse a request for information if we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit, which currently



stands at £600. On the basis of our estimates, we consider that the cost would exceed this limit and, as such, we are refusing your request.

Section 12(2) provides that we are not required to confirm whether Defra holds the information requested if by doing so we would exceed the appropriate cost limit of £600. This is the case for the information that you have requested, and so please note that this response should not be taken as confirmation that the information is held by Defra.

However, if you were to make a new request for a narrower category of information, it may be that we could comply with that request within the appropriate limit, although we cannot guarantee that this will be the case.

The best way we can help you is to ask you to consider narrowing down your request to focus more clearly on the precise information you are seeking. You could, for example, ask just the second part of your question on expenditure with named suppliers.

Please note that if you modify your request, we will handle it as a new request and so the 20-working-day deadline for responding to requests would then commence from the date that we receive the modified request.

We attach an annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the address below.

Yours sincerely

**Mark Shotton**  
**Information Rights Team**  
[InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk](mailto:InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk)

## **Annex**

### **Complaints**

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Andrew Mobsby, Head of Information Rights via email at [InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk](mailto:InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our website.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure.

The ICO's offices are currently closed so please visit their website on how to contact them during this period, here:

<https://ico.org.uk>