



UK Health
Security
Agency

By email: request-802429-2899f134@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref: 09/11/21/yd/1662

6th December 2021

Dear Mr John Lubbock,

Re: Actual spend on Test and Trace

Thank you for your request received on 09 November 2021 addressed to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). In accordance with Section 1(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), I can confirm that UKHSA does hold the information you have specified.

Request

The press constantly quotes a figure of £37 billion as the cost of the Test, Track and Trace system. As far as I am aware, this represents the projected value of framework agreements for testing supplies, personnel and other services which could be spent on Testing, Tracking and Tracing the spread of Covid-19 from 2020-2022.

Can you please let me have an estimate of how much of this projected value has actually been spent so far?

Response

In accordance with Section 1(1)(a) of Act, UKHSA can confirm that it does hold the information requested. The £37 billion is the total budget for Test and Trace for 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years (£22 billion in 2020/21 and £15 billion in 2021/22).

The information pertaining to the actual audited expenditure for 2020/21 will be published as part of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) Annual Report and Accounts. For 2021/22, spending plans are currently underway and will be published once the annual accounts are audited.

This information is therefore exempt under Section 22(1) of the Act. Under Section 22(1) a public authority is not obliged to provide information that is intended for future publication.

Section 22 is a qualified exemption subject to the public interest test. UKHSA has considered whether it would be in the public interest to provide you the information ahead of publication, despite the exemption being applicable.

In line with Section 22(1) of the Act, the following factors were considered in favour of release:

- The public interest in transparency and the commitment of UKHSA to be open and transparent;
- Disclosing information to present a full picture to enable wider public scrutiny of decision making.

Factors supporting maintaining the exemption:

- As the information is of interest to the wider general public, it is important to provide access to this information to the general public in a simultaneous, co-ordinated manner, rather than disclosure to individuals under the Act. Thus, it is in the public interest to withhold the information in line with the publication schedule, so the validated information is accessible to the wider general public at the same time;
- It is important to ensure quality assurance and approval processes are completed prior to disclosure to ensure that the reporting is correct and accurate;
- UKHSA and the DHSC intend to publish the requested information in due course.

Taking into account the above factors, the public interest test favours non-disclosure of the specified information.

If you have any queries regarding the information that has been supplied to you, please refer your query to the Information Rights Team in writing in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied and would like to request an internal review, then please contact us at the address above or by emailing InformationRights@UKHSA.gov.uk.

Please note that you have the right to an independent review by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) if a complaint cannot be resolved through the UKHSA complaints procedure. The ICO can be contacted by calling the ICO's helpline on 0303 123 1113, visiting the ICO's website at www.ico.org.uk or writing to the ICO at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,
Information Rights Team