

S Carroll

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17 May 2021

Dear S Carroll

Ref: FOI2021/12613

## Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your enquiry dated 16 April 2021 (under our reference: FOI2020/12613), which we have considered under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act).

You asked for the following information:

*"For the costing documents related to the written statement made by Paymaster General Ms Mordaunt on the 25th of March 2021. The timescale planning document for the same statement?"*

*Who from the Treasury is responsible for the project management for the implantation laid out in the written statement as a point of accountability? If there is such team?*

*The document's related to the transfer of funds for the Parity Scheme from the Treasury to the four Government Scheme's in each nation of the UK?*

*How many minted meetings have taken place between the Treasury, The Cabinet Office & EIBSS between 01/11/20 - 14/04/21? Please provide the minutes."*

Following a search of our records, we can confirm that HM Treasury does hold some information within the scope of your request, which is set out below.

*For the costing documents related to the written statement made by Paymaster General Ms Mordaunt on the 25th of March 2021. The timescale planning document for the same statement?*

The information that we have identified engages section 35(1)(a) of the FOI Act. Section 35(1)(a) is engaged because the information in scope relates to the development of Government policy on Infected Blood victim support schemes. This is a qualified exemption and we are required to balance the public interest between disclosure and non-disclosure of the information.

In relation to the release of this information, we recognise that there is an inherent public interest in transparency and accountability of public authorities. We also recognise the broad public interest in furthering public understanding of the issues with which public authorities deal. There is a clear public interest in the work of Government departments being transparent and open to scrutiny to increase diligence.

Balanced against this, with regard to section 35(1)(a) is the public interest in protecting the Government's ability to discuss and develop policies in a safe space and to reach well-formed conclusions. The Information Commissioner has recognised that policy development needs some degree of freedom to enable the process to work effectively and we consider that there is a strong public interest in protecting information where release would be likely to have a detrimental impact on the ongoing development of policy. There is a strong public interest in protecting against encroachment on the ability of ministers and/or officials to develop policy options freely and frankly. In this particular case the costings HM Treasury holds were shared by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) during the process of developing the changes to the infected blood support schemes and are not the final costings.

Given the above considerations, we conclude that the public interest lies in favour of withholding this information.

*Who from the Treasury is responsible for the project management for the implantation laid out in the written statement as a point of accountability? If there is such team?*

DHSC has responsibility with the England Infected Blood support scheme for the implementation of the changes to the English scheme, and the devolved administrations will be responsible for their schemes.

*The document's related to the transfer of funds for the Parity Scheme from the Treasury to the four Government Scheme's in each nation of the UK?*

HM Treasury does not hold documents related to the transfer of funds for the Parity scheme to the four schemes in each nation of the UK. DHSC are administering the transfer of funds.

*How many minted meetings have taken place between the Treasury, The Cabinet Office & EIBSS between 01/11/20 - 14/04/21? Please provide the minutes*

No minuted meetings between HM Treasury, the Cabinet Office, and EIBSS took place between the dates provided.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us. Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Information Rights Unit

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