Ms Sarah Louise Barbera
By email to: request-1012865-5d6ee46b@whatdotheyknow.com

5 September 2023

Dear Ms Barbera,

Freedom of Information Request Reference FOI-1465612

Thank you for your request dated 6 August to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), a copy of which can be found in the accompanying annex.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

DHSC holds information relevant to your request. However, to provide the information as it is currently framed would exceed the appropriate cost limit set out in the FOIA.

Section 12(1) of the FOIA means public authorities are not obliged to comply with a request for information if it estimates the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit for DHSC is set at £600, which represents the cost of one person spending 24 working hours determining whether we hold the information, and then locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

It may help if we explain that processing your request, although DHSC does have behavioural scientists, it would require that we consider every staff member in DHSC, both past and present, in order to locate and extract any relevant information as the number of Whole Time Equivalent (WTE) behavioural scientists, and any one with psychologist in their job title, is not confined to any specific team and is not centrally held.

Therefore, a large volume of information in relation to your request will need to be individually reviewed in detail in order to determine if it contains information within scope of your request. We have estimated that the cost of going through and reviewing any of the relevant information found would exceed the appropriate limit. Consequently, we will not be answering your request.

Although we cannot answer your request at the moment, you may wish to consider limiting your request to the most up to date information in the department. Please be aware that we cannot guarantee at this stage that a refined request would fall within the FOIA cost limit, or that other exemptions will not apply.

If you are not satisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to appeal by asking for an internal review. This should be sent to freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk or to the address at the top of this letter and be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.
Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communication.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have already appealed our original response and received our internal review decision. You should raise your concerns with the ICO within three months of your last meaningful contact with us.

Guidance on contacting the ICO can be found at https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us and information about making a complaint can be found at https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint.

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Team
freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk
Dear Department of Health and Social Care,

1. In total, how many whole-time equivalent (WTE) ‘behavioural scientists’ were employed in your Health and Social Care department as of:

   a) 1st September 2019?
   b) 1st September 2020?
   c) 1st September 2021?
   d) 1st September 2022?

2. In total, what was the annual cost of employing behavioural scientists – both in-house employees and those commissioned to provide advice on a sessional basis - in your Health and Social Care department in:

   a) 2019?
   b) 2020?
   c) 2021?
   d) 2022?

3. In addition to behavioural scientists, how many WTEs with ‘psychologist’ in their job titles (for example ‘social psychologist’, ‘behavioural psychologist’, ‘occupational psychologist’) were employed in your Health and Social Care department as of:

   a) 1st September 2019?
   b) 1st September 2020?
   c) 1st September 2021?
   d) 1st September 2022?

4. In total, what was the annual cost of employing psychologists - both in-house employees and those commissioned to provide advice on a sessional basis - in your Health and Social Care department in:

   a) 2019?
   b) 2020?
   c) 2021?
   d) 2022?

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Louise Barbera

Please use this email address for all replies to this request:
request-1012865-5d6ee46b@whatdotheyknow.com