



Department
for Work &
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Our Ref: IR2021/07704

26 February 2021

Dear Frank Zola,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) internal review request received on 29 January 2021 relating to FOI2021/01092. You wrote:

"I am writing to request an internal review of Department for Work and Pensions's handling of my FOI request 'Coronavirus intranet webpage'.

You said I have "requested screen shots", this is not correct as my request makes no reference to "screen shots", on the internet it is a convention that a website address is known as a URL (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/URL>). For instance the gov.uk has a page that covers Coronavirus:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
([https:// www. gov. uk/ coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus))

you can see an archive of the gov.uk page at:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20210129123125/https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
([https:// web. archive .org/ web/ 20210129123125/https://www .gov .uk/coronavirus](https://web.archive.org/web/20210129123125/https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus))

My request solely focuses on individual intranet pages covering Coronavirus and I therefore do not consider requests on this topic are of a "frivolous nature".

Just like this information on [https:// www. gov. uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) the specific recorded information" I have requested concerns Coronavirus. You say the request is of a "non-specific nature and scattergun approach", this is manifestly incorrect as the request is for information specifically about Coronavirus.

You imply I must know the content of the individual webpages I requesting for my request to be valid, this is not in the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act, nor does it reflect how information is organised on the internet or equivalent intranets.

When you have disclosed pages of your intranet via FOI requests on <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/> you have saved them as an intact 'html' webpage and converted it to PDF format, this is not a 'screenshot', as a screenshots are normally a digital image that shows the contents of a computer display. I do not want screenshot

copies of the information I have requested, I prefer original 'html' webpages converted to PDF.

I find it truly insulting that the DWP does not consider there is a significant public interest in disclosure of the information I have requested, which concerns the global Coronavirus pandemic.

[2nd email]

In your reply to my request for an Internal Review can you confirm how you came to the view that my request for information solely on the topic of Coronavirus is of a "frivolous nature"?

Noting the ICO guidance that states:

"Frivolous requests

The subject matter is inane or extremely trivial and the request appears to lack any serious purpose. The request is made for the sole purpose of amusement."

<https://ico.org.uk/media/1198/dealing-with-vexatious-requests.pdf>"

You subsequently clarified your Internal Review request in a follow up email where you wrote:

"To help with my request for individual intranet pages, covering the topic of Coronavirus, below is a set of

successful FOI requests for intranet pages:

"Please could you supply me with a print out/copy of the front page of your internal intranet "

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954007/20201110-Redacted_reply_to_12218_re_MDP_Intranet_Front_Page-O.pdf

Extensive pages from the Metropolitan Police Service - 'MPS Intranet'

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/mps_intranet#incoming-503118

Bedfordshire Police

Intranet Homepage

<https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/706376/response/1686789/attach/html/3/Beds%20Intranet%20Homepage%20redacted.pdf.html>

Requests for intranet based information, via FOI requests, is common across other jurisdictions:

Australia

<https://www.righttoknow.org.au/search/intranet/all>

EU

<https://www.asktheeu.org/en/search/intranet/all?query=intranet>

New Zealand

<https://fyi.org.nz/search/intranet/all>

USA

<https://www.muckrock.com/search/?q=intranet>

To help further with my request, please go to:

How to save a web page [save an intranet page]

<https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/how-save-web-page>

In the past you have disclosed intranet information I requested:

Your Jobcentre Customer Facing Risk Assessment (JCFRA) posted on your intranet

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/your_jobcentre_customer_facing_r#incoming-1655473

you can view references to your intranet in the FOI requests listed at:

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/body/dwp?utf8=%E2%9C%93&query=intranet&request_date_after=&request_date_before=&commit=Search

On the <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com> FOI site there is a page dedicated to the DWP: <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/body/dwp> which covers 11858 requests. Much of the disclosures you have made have been information found on your intranet and many concerned topic based requests that concerned the content of information the requester does not know.

To use a pre internet analogy of a book, I am requesting very specific URL pages on the topic of Coronavirus and in the internet/intranet age each page is hyperlinked, like pages of a book. A book usually has a content page and for complex technical subjects would also have a Subject/Topic based index, with the index indicating which page contains content according to Subject/Topic. Your response to my request for information is akin to denying specific numbered pages from a book, on the spurious basis I do not know the content.

When you disclose the information I have requested, please use the save function included as a basic function in all browsers, so you

save the 'Web page, HTML only' and disclose the saved information/intranet page(s) to me in the original 'HTML' format."

DWP Response

In response to your internal review request, we can confirm that the handling of your original request and response has now been appropriately reviewed by someone unconnected with the handling of your original request.

As a result of this review we are satisfied that the original response was handled properly and that the outcome of your original request was correct. Your complaint is therefore not upheld and the reason for this is as follows.

You were provided with a Section 14(1) response on the basis that;

- You have not requested specific recorded information that we hold, you have requested screen shots without knowing what that might reveal
- The non-specific nature and scattergun approach of your request appears to lack any serious purpose, we consider it to be a fishing exercise which will only generate further requests for information.

We find this position to still be accurate in that you are asking for copies of complete intranet pages without any notion of what is contained on them and the assumption here is that this is done without trying to obtain any specific held information but to provide you with details on things that you could subsequently request under future FOIs. Overall asking for similar copies of different intranet pages, using Coronavirus as the defining criteria, further supports the notion that the request is simply an approach to try and obtain information without any real purpose of what it may reveal, that you can then use to make further FOI requests using the intranet materials as the key driving factor.

In your follow-up email you kindly provided examples of other FOIs from a range of public authorities both subject to and outside the scope of the FOI Act 2000. Whilst it is helpful to see how other public authorities have responded to a similar FOI it does not set a precedent for how we have / must respond. All FOIs are judged purpose blind, as we are required to under the FOI Act and the response is provided based on the information held at the time of the request.

You have raised a point that you did not ask for screen shots and on review you did not, however the response was simply indicating that in order to provide you with the information you requested we would provide screen shots, although as you have pointed out we could supply you with a PDF version of a HTML page. In either case the information provided to you would be the same no matter which method would be chosen to present it.

Finally, you have asked us to explain why we deem this a frivolous request. The reference was to the nature of your request, as explained above, in that, it lacks any serious purpose as it was not asking for specific held information and appears to be a fishing exercise to gather any information for the sole purpose of generating further requests for information

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team
Department for Work and Pensions

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Website: [ICO Contact Information](#) or telephone 0303 123 1113.