Sarah Louise Barbera  
By email: request-1027315-8f08a028@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Sarah Louise Barbera

We refer to your request where you asked:

“a) Does your department have a Government Communications Service Behavioural Science Team?

b) If yes, how many members are in the Government Communications Service Behavioural Science Team, and what is the annual cost?”

We are writing to advise you that following a search of our paper and electronic records, we have established that the information you requested is held by the Cabinet Office.

We currently have fewer than 5 Behavioural Scientists within Cabinet Office GCS.

Please note that a more specific headcount and the annual cost is being withheld under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would, amongst other things, contravene one of the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the UK General Data Protection Regulation and section 34(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

In this case, we believe disclosure would contravene the first data protection principle, which provides that processing of personal data must be lawful, fair and transparent.

We consider that disclosure of the information would contravene principle A under article 5(1)(a) of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which requires that
personal data should be processed lawfully, fairly, and transparently.

We have considered the legitimate interests in disclosure and have found that on balance there is no overriding legitimate interest or necessity in disclosure that overrides the reasonable expectations of privacy of the individual[s] concerned.

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and the Cabinet Office is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information.

In this case, the numbers concerned are 5 individuals or fewer. We cannot provide details in such cases as the individuals concerned could be identifiable. This is standard statistical reporting.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request or wish to request an internal review, you should write to:

Head of Freedom of Information
Cabinet Office
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

email: foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Cabinet Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Yours sincerely

[Signature]

FOI Team
Cabinet Office