

Mr G Knox

By Email

Tel : 028 9536 3007

Web Site : www.hscbusiness.hscni.net

15 December 2015

Dear Mr Knox,

I refer to your email of 17 November 2015 seeking a review of the BSO handling of your FOI request, HSC Shared Services; Backlog of Legacy Invoices (FOIs 427 & 485-15)

The request has been considered by Mr Robin McClelland, Non-Executive Director of BSO and Mr H McPoland, Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services, BSO.

The review team has considered the request and has also considered the advice set out in the Information Commissioners Office guidance note "Requests where the cost of compliance exceed the appropriate limit." This guidance which can be found at the following link deals with the issue of aggregation of requests on Page 12.

https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1199/costs_of_compliance_exceeds_appropriate_limit.pdf

Having considered the guidance the review team considered the following options.

- 1. To uphold the original decision**
- 2. To request payment for the information requested**
- 3. Provide the information as requested without comment.**

Having considered the guidance and options the panel is of the view that the original decision by officers of the BSO was not unreasonable given the repetitive and similar nature of the requests to BSO by yourself since March 2015 which included 10 separate requests all of which were provided by BSO without charge.

However the review team believes that you should be provided with the information if you confirm that you are prepared to pay for the information on the basis of our normal charge which is £25 per hour. It is also the view of the review team that any future requests seeking the same or broadly similar information as set out in the ICO Guidance will also be the subject to a charge as it would appear to meet the guidance for aggregation as set by the Information Commissioners office.

I would direct you to Paragraphs 44 and 45 of the ICO Guidance referred to above. In the spirit of the FOI legislation we would suggest that quarterly requests could be considered without charge.

I trust this letter clarifies the position for you. However, if you are not content with the outcome of your request, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the appeal procedure by the Authority.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

Website: www.ico.org.uk

Phone: 0303 123 1113

Email: casework@ico.org.uk

Post: Information Commissioner's Office, 3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place, Belfast, BT7 2JB

If you have any queries about this letter, please get in touch. Please quote the reference number in any future communications to make it easier to deal with your correspondence.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hugh McPoland', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Hugh McPoland
Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services