






Ministry  
of Defence



DE&S Secretariat 

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Ref: FOI2018/12075

Magnus Ponsonby-Talbot  
request-521984-7f454842@whatdotheyknow.com

23 October 2018

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Dear Mr Ponsonby-Talbot,

Thank you for your email, dated 26 September 2018, which asked for the following information:

1. *The salary benchmarks for Level 2 Project Managers and Level 2 Project Controls (specifically Scheduling and Risk Management).*

*I would also like to know;*

2. *what companies were used as part of the benchmarking exercise*
3. *I would like you to confirm whether or not MOD Main and other equivalent civil service departments were used as part of the benchmarking exercise*
4. *was the exercise restricted to UK based companies or did it include companies in the USA and elsewhere*
5. *did it take into account the average salary that could be commanded by a contractor with a similar level of expertise that would be expected of a Level 2*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). A search has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held.

### **Question 1: Salary benchmarks for Level 2 Project Managers and Level 2 Project Controls**

Information relating to the benchmarking data falls entirely within scope of Section 43(2) (Commercial Interests) of the FOIA. This provides that information is exempt if its disclosure under the Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it). A public interest test was conducted which concluded that, while disclosure of benchmarking information would facilitate public sector pay transparency, release of information that DE&S has procured from a third party would compromise the commercial interests of the company involved (Willis Towers Watson). Disclosure could also allow benchmarks to be estimated and reveal DE&S' pay profile to competitor organisations, which would also undermine DE&S' commercial interests. As such, the information you have requested relating to pay benchmarks has been withheld. I have set the level of prejudice to the higher level of 'would'.

**Question 2: What companies were used as part of the benchmarking exercise**

**Question 3: Confirm whether or not MOD Main and other equivalent civil service departments were used as part of the benchmarking exercise.**

**Question 4: was the exercise restricted to UK based companies or did it include companies in the USA and elsewhere**

A list of companies, which were used to benchmark against DE&S roles, can be found on the attached annex with this letter; these companies are all UK based.

DE&S staff manage some hugely complex projects, some of the most challenging across Government, and this requires specialist skills that are not usually found within the wider public sector. As such, MOD Main and other equivalent civil service departments do not participate within the Willis Towers Watson salary surveys meaning that, whilst consideration may have been given to relevant salary levels, they could not be considered as part of the benchmarking process.

**Question 5: did it take into account the average salary that could be commanded by a contractor with a similar level of expertise that would be expected of a Level 2.**

The DE&S benchmarking process only uses data provided through the commercial agreement by the organisations listed within the annex.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

DE&S Secretariat

| <b>Company name</b> |                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Amey                | General Electric            |
| Arup Group          | GKN                         |
| Atkins Global       | Hewlett-Packard             |
| AWE                 | Honeywell                   |
| BAE Systems         | High Speed 2                |
| Balfour Beatty      | Hitachi                     |
| Bechtel             | Jacobs Engineering          |
| Boeing              | Komatsu                     |
| Bombardier          | Lockheed Martin             |
| BorgWarner          | MBDA                        |
| British Gas         | Mitsubishi Heavy Industries |
| Centrica            | Network Rail                |
| CH2M Hill           | Northrop Grumman            |
| DHL                 | QinetiQ                     |
| E.ON                | Rolls-Royce                 |
| EDF Energy          | RWE npower                  |
| Fluor               | Serco Group                 |
| General Dynamics    | Thales                      |