



Mr. Shaun Davey
request-434733-e993c019@whatdotheyknow.com

Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8GB
Tel: (028) 9054 0682
Email: Paul.McGrory@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference:
Our reference: DFI/2017-0388

11 October 2017

Dear Mr. Davey

You wrote to the Department on 06 October 2017 requesting an internal review of the handling of your Freedom of Information (FOI) request for information regarding the Department's involvement in the production of studies on the impact of Brexit, received in the Department on 28 September 2017. You had received a response to your request on 05 October, from Mr. Jim Sutherland, reference DFI/2017-0388.

An explanation of my role with regard to Internal Reviews and a summary of the correspondence are attached at **Annex A**.

I have examined the information relating to your request and completed my review. I can now inform you that, having reviewed the handling of your request, the Department did fulfil its obligation under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

In your original request, while reference was made to some 50 studies created by the Department for Exiting the European Union, only one study was clearly identified. This study related to a function for which, in Northern Ireland, the Department for Infrastructure has no responsibility. The Department would, therefore, hold no information relating to this study.

In its response to your earlier request, the Department for Exiting the European Union stated that it "holds the sectoral analyses referred to in your request". However, the response did not advise what economic areas were covered in these sectoral analyses. Nor was this information to be found in the original article in The Independent.

The Department for Infrastructure has no knowledge of what studies that DExEU has compiled nor of whether any input from this Department has been included in any of these sectoral analyses.

As currently framed, your request does not allow the Department for Infrastructure to identify any information that may have been included in the DExEU sectoral analyses. The Department must, therefore, conclude that the information is not held.

I hope you find this helpful. If you are dissatisfied with my findings, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner and may do so by writing to him at the following address:

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

I am copying this letter to Mr. Sutherland as he provided you with the initial response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Paul McGrory', with a stylized, flowing script.

PAUL MCGRORY
Departmental Information Manager

Annex A

My role as Departmental Information Manager

As Departmental Information Manager, my role in carrying out an 'Internal Review' following a complaint or 'appeal', is pursuant to the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs' Code of Practice [which now comes under the responsibility of the Secretary of State for the Department of Justice] on the discharge of public authorities' functions under Part 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and, by extension, the Environmental Information Regulations. Section 39 of the Code of Practice requires "a fair and thorough review of the handling issues and of decisions taken pursuant to the [Freedom of Information] Act, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information." Under the Environmental Information Regulations, this review of the handling of your request for information is a "reconsideration", a public authority obligation contained within Regulation 11 (Representations and Reconsideration). I have no role or locus with regards to any issues arising out of the substance of any information sought or the resolution of complaints, which may be the subject matter of the information.

Summary of correspondence

Request - 28 September 2017

I refer to my Fol request to the DExEU:

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/studies_on_the_impact_of_brexit#outgoing-681506

And their response:

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/studies_on_the_impact_of_brexit#incoming-1043508

In the response to Item 5a, DExEU says: "We can confirm that DExEU does not hold this information. This exercise relied on expertise and involvement from across Government, and we are as such unable to ascertain the effort in days that went into producing these studies."

I now have the following questions of your department. I would be grateful if you would answer these questions on behalf of your department and those government agencies reporting through your department. If you are unable to report on behalf of your agencies, please let me know and I will make further Fol requests directly to those agencies.

1. Did your department (or associated agencies) have any role in the production of any of the studies referred to in the above referenced Fol request and response from DExEU?
2. If your department or your agencies did have a role, what was that role?
3. If your agencies had a role, please specify which agencies were involved?
4. If you or your agencies did have a role, what was the total amount of effort (in person days) expended by civil servants or department/agency-supervised government contractors on all of the studies to which you (or your agencies) contributed?

5. If you or your agencies did have a role, was any of the work subcontracted to external service providers under fixed-price or time/materials terms? If so, please provide details of these contracts including the supplier, the value and the contracting route?
6. Please identify the studies to which you or your agencies contributed?

Response - 05 October 2017

Please note the following responses to your questions in the order raised:

- **Question 1** - the only report identified in your FoI request, including the Independent article, and the subsequent response from DExEU, is the leaked Department of Health report;
- **Question 2** - I can confirm that the Department for Infrastructure, including its agency, had no role in the development of this report; and
- **Questions 3-6** – information not held in light of 1 and 2 above.

Internal Review Request - 06 October 2017

I am writing to request an internal review of Department for Infrastructure (Northern Ireland)'s handling of my FOI request 'Roles of Government Departments Involved in the Production of Studies on the Impact of Brexit'.

In your response to Question 1, you said: "Question 1 - the only report identified in your FoI request, including the Independent article, and the subsequent response from DExEU, is the leaked Department of Health report;"

This is erroneous: I assume that you must have misread or misunderstood my FoI request. My original FoI enquiry to DExEU mentions 'over fifty studies', and DExEU in their response, confirms the existence of these studies:

Text from my request to DExEU: "It has been widely reported in the press that your department holds over fifty studies on the impact of Brexit on the UK economy"

Text from DExEU's response: "1. I can confirm that the Department holds the sectoral analyses referred to in your request."

The information I am requesting from you relates to your department's involvement in ANY of these studies, and not just the one which happens to have been leaked.

I would be grateful if you would reconsider my FoI request in the light of the above clarification.