



Department
for Education

Department for Education
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www.gov.uk/df

Email enquiry form:

www.education.gov.uk/contactus/df

16 December 2020

Dear Andrew Keenan,

Thank you for your request for information, which was received on 17 November 2020.

You made a request for information based on a previous FOI reply (ref: 2020-0053539), asking for the same information provided for 2020-0053539 but “for the period 17 September to present”. I am dealing with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”).

I would like to offer my apologies for the delay in responding. The Department takes very seriously its obligations under the Act, including the requirement to respond within the statutory deadline of 20 working days. I am afraid that we have not been able to maintain this standard in this instance and while there may be considered to be mitigating circumstances, this delay is not acceptable and I am very sorry for the inconvenience which it may cause you.

The Department holds some of the information you have requested and we are considering your case. I consider that the following exemption(s) apply to your request:

- Section 35(1)(a) – the formulation or development of government policy

Where the above exemption is applicable, the Department must consider whether the public interest lies in disclosing or withholding the information. We are currently working on this and we will send a full response as soon as possible. Due to the Christmas period, we anticipated that you will receive a full response by 12 January 2021. If it appears that it will take longer than this to reach a conclusion, we will keep you informed.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled, you should make a complaint to the Department by writing to me within two calendar months of the date of this letter. Your complaint will be considered by an independent review panel, which were not involved in the original consideration of your request. If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint to the Department, you may then contact the Information Commissioner's Office.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number 2020-0064809 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

HE Briefing Team
Department for Education