



Via Email

20 August 2013

Dear Ms Wild

FOI reference 1072

Thank you for your request, received on 31 July 2013, made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The functions previously undertaken by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) are now carried out by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS). The DBS was established under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and provides information to help employers in England and Wales make informed safer recruitment decisions, especially those involving children or vulnerable groups. The DBS also helps prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups including children. The DBS are now the owners of the information that was previously held by the CRB and the ISA.

I note your request for information was as follows:

I am writing to obtain information about the total amount of money paid to trade unions by your organisation, the amount of staff time spent on trade union duties and/or activities and the payment of subscriptions.

To outline my query as clearly as possible, I am requesting:

1. A list of trade unions which received payments from your organisation and the total amounts paid to each union for financial years a) 2011-12 and b) 2012-13. If it is not possible to list the amount paid to each union, please provide a total amount paid to all unions. Please do not include membership dues or salary costs. Please only include direct payments.

2. Please state:

a) Which trade unions your organisation provide staff time to work on trade union duties and / or activities (sometimes called 'Trade Union facility time') in i) 2011-12 and ii) 2012-13.

b) The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff that were provided for each trade union in i) 2011-12 and ii) 2012-13. For example, if a member of staff spends 2 days per week on union business, this is equal to 0.4 FTE.

3.

a) Does your organisation provide the facility to deduct trade union subscriptions from staff salaries in the payroll process?

b) If so, for each union please state what your organisation charged for this service (whether as a fixed amount per employee or a percentage), and the total amount collected in:

i) 2011-12

ii) 2012-13

Please note that the guidelines issued by ACAS state that: "An employee who is a member of an independent trade union recognised by the employer in respect of that description of employee is to be permitted reasonable time off during working hours to take part in any trade union activity. An employee who is a member of an independent and recognised trade union is also permitted to take reasonable time off during working hours for the purposes of accessing the services of a Union Learning Representative (provided those services are services for which the Union Learning Representative is entitled to time off)."

If the information is not recorded, there is no way of ascertaining whether the time off provided is reasonable. I therefore do not expect the response that the organisation does not hold this information. If a formal record is not kept then I will accept a reasonable estimate.

If the response to any of the questions is 'nil' or you are unable to answer any of them, please continue to respond to the other questions

My preferred format to receive this information is electronically, but if that is not possible I will gladly accept letters at the address below.

I would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of this request as soon as possible.

Response

1. No trade unions have received payments from the DBS in 2011/12 and 2012/13.

2. a. The trade union for DBS staff is Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) and covers the financial years stipulated in your request.

b. The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff that were provided for PCS in both financial years was 2.07.

3. a. The DBS does provide the facility to deduct trade union subscriptions from staff salaries in the payroll process.

b. There was no charge made by the payroll provider for deduction of subscriptions from salaries in either of the financial years specified in your request.

Your right to request an internal review under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are dissatisfied with our response or our handling of your FOI request you may request an internal review by e-mailing dbsfoi@dbs.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to Freedom of Information Manager, Disclosure & Barring Service, PO Box 165, L69 3JD. You should submit any request for review within two months of the date of this letter.

In all possible circumstances the Disclosure & Barring Service will aim to respond to your request for review as soon as practicable and in any case within 40 calendar days.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF www.ico.gov.uk.

I hope this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

Elise Snelham

DBS Freedom of Information Officer

E dbsfoi@dbs.gsi.gov.uk