

04/04/12

Thank you for your email of 3 March 2012 where you requested information about early release schemes used to reduce headcount in the department and related agencies since May 2010 and including all years for which financial projections have been made.

As part of the spending review settlement, the DCLG Group is making a collective 33% real terms saving against its running costs by 2014-15. This equates to savings of over £200 million by 2014-15. In addition, the Department will save a further £190 million from the closure of the Government offices for the regions, taking overall savings on administrative running costs to 42% across the DCLG Group by 2014-15.

These savings reflect the coalition Government's agenda of decentralisation, ending the micromanagement of local government, the abolition of regional government, and the broader need to tackle the deficit left by the last Administration.

Information for the main DCLG Department is attached as follows

Full details of early release schemes used to reduce headcount in the department and related agencies since May 2010

Please find attached scheme documentation for Approved Early Retirement, Voluntary Exit and Voluntary Redundancy schemes run since May 2010.

Details of projected changes in headcount

Please find attached a copy of our Staff Information Pack dated 9 March 2011 which set out details of our new structure and the process we proposed to achieve the necessary headcount reductions.

The actual and allocated costs.

Up to £130m was made available to cover staff exit costs for DCLG and its Agencies from May 2010 to 2012. To date £92.9m has been paid.

However, I have not enclosed information on the **actual changes in headcount and the actual breakdown between voluntary/compulsory departures for 2010/2011** because the information is exempt under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) as it is already in the public domain. Please use the following web

address where the information can be retrieved

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1946774.pdf>

Additionally I have not enclosed information on **actual changes in headcount and the actual breakdown between voluntary/compulsory departures for 2011/2012** because the information is exempt under Section 22(1) of the FOI Act, i.e. “the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not).”

This information will be published as part of the Department’s annual report and accounts for the 2011/12 financial year.

Section 22 of the FOI Act is a qualified exemption which means that information falling within the exemption may only be withheld where the public interest in disclosure is outweighed by the public interest in maintaining the exemption.

The Department recognises the general principle of openness enshrined in the FOI Act and that provision of information held by public authorities to the public helps, as a general principle, increase accountability and transparency and thus public trust and confidence. The Department recognises how disclosure of the information you have asked for helps meet those aims.

However, there is a fixed intention to publish the information you have asked for and that information will be published once the Department’s annual report and accounts is finalised. We take the view that there is little public interest served by disclosing the information on request ahead of that planned publication.

On balance, therefore, we have concluded that the exemption at section 22(1) should be maintained in this case and the information should be withheld until the time that it is published.

The Department has three Executive Agencies and information from these is as follows.

The Queen Elizabeth 11 Conference Centre has not run any early release schemes to reduce headcount.

The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) ran a Voluntary Exit Scheme in 2010/11. As a result of this scheme, PINS headcount reduced by 80. The cost of this exercise was £2,986,703.00

A further voluntary scheme has been launched for 2011/2012. PINS headcount will reduce by 18 as a result of this scheme. The expected costs for this exercise are £272,596.69, however, these are yet to be finalised.

PINS does not have approval for any further schemes at this time.

Fire Service College

Year	Planned Changes In headcount	Actual Changes in headcount	Projected Potential CR	Actual VR / CR	Allocated costs	Actual costs
2011/12	up to 16	13	up to 3 CR	13 VR	£715k	£715k

Please note £715k includes CILON costs

Under CO protocols FSC would seek to redeploy the 3 remaining employees.