



Our ref: 2016/05204  
Your ref:

Date 9 June 2016

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 16 May 2016 requesting the following information:

*"I seek information about the DSTL's back office operations, specifically the following [your list of nine questions]"*

We are treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

For ease of reference, our responses are provided against each of your nine questions in turn, below:

1. *How many people do you currently have within your back office operations team?*
  - 590 Average Contracted Full Time Equivalent staff.
2. *Does the DSTL outsource work, if so what bits specifically?*
  - Dstl has outsourced work, specifically facilities management and related services to Serco, Knowledge and Information Services including Information Communication Technology services to Sopra Steria. Clarity Travel Management provides Travel Services to Dstl and Calder Conferences is our external events provider both via Crown Commercial Services Agreements in line with Government policy.
3. *How many people in total are employed across the whole of the DSTL estate?*
  - 3,738 average contracted Full Time Equivalent staff at financial year-end 2015/16.
4. *How much does it cost the DSTL per annum in salaries to run the back office operations?*
  - £31.3m including employers ERNIC and pension contributions.

5. *How much time on average do humans in the back office spend on performing rules based, manual and repetitive tasks that require no real level of intuition?*
  - Our time-reporting system does not measure or capture information of this nature.
6. *What processes are currently causing large backlogs of work within the DSTL?*
  - Our time-reporting system does not measure or capture this information.
7. *How many of the business processes (as a rough %) require people who are interacting with the DSTL to complete manual or web based forms?*
  - Our systems do not capture this information. However, we are not clear whether this interaction relates to people inside or outside of Dstl. For example, people applying for jobs at Dstl have to use a web-based application form but this is not owned by Dstl.
8. *Have you used, or are there any plans to use a Robotic Process Automation (RPA) type solution, in order to reduce the manual, repetitive tasks which are currently being performed by humans?*
  - We have not used nor plan to use a Robotic Process Automation solution.
9. *What solutions or methodologies are the DSTL considering in order to help reduce costs in the back office in order to meet strict budgetary cuts imposed by the government?"*
  - Dstl has a programme of activities aimed at reducing the cost and increasing efficiency of our support functions. For example, we are implementing a review of our business processes, applying the latest methodologies to reduce the complexity and improve the efficiency of these processes. Also, we are reviewing our non-staff overhead costs with a view to finding significant savings. Finally, by rationalising the service the support functions provide we have been able to start implementing a reduction in staff numbers.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Dstl Secretariat