



AGO

Attorney General's Office

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Our Ref. FOI|70|13

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8 May 2013

Dear [REDACTED]

You asked for the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:

" I would like to understand if you give out giftcards to staff for performance related reasons or for any other reasons. If you do I would like to understand:

The rationale for giving gift cards to staff when we are in this period of economic austerity and are cutting people benefits as well as freezing pays for most of the public sector. It is basically a bonus by another name.

*The types (i.e Company) of gift cards given out to staff in the past 3 calender years
The value of the gift cars given out in the past 3 calendar years (the total and no of each demonication of gift card given out)*

The grades of staff that these were given and the number of staff in each grade

I would also like to understand if the purchase of these gift cards is done in house or is outsourced?

If it is outsourced I am keen to understand the supplier, the value of this contact in total and by each year. Also the contract advertisement date, method of advertisement (i.e OJEU website or advertising portal), retender date and the length of the contract."

After a search of electronic and paper records under section 1(1)(a) of the Act I can confirm that we hold the following information:

The Attorney General's Office operates a special bonus scheme that allows managers and staff to nominate an individual of Grade 6 or below for a bonus as a token of appreciation for achievements relating to specific tasks or activities. The nomination must be approved by the Executive Board. The bonus is a Marks & Spencer or Love2Shop voucher, value £100.

In 2010/11 there were vouchers for £50, as well as £100. A total of £500 M&S vouchers were awarded to staff and a total of £800 Love2 Shop vouchers were awarded. They were awarded as follows: M&S 6 x £50 2 x £100 Love2Shop 2 x £50 7 x £100.

In 2011/12, a total of 8 x £100 M&S vouchers and 11 x £100 Love2Shop vouchers were awarded.

In 2012/13, a total of 8 x £100 M&S vouchers and 6 x Love2Shop vouchers were awarded.

It is not possible to give a breakdown of the grades of people receiving bonuses without revealing the identities of staff. This is exempt information under section 40 (personal information) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), as due to the size of the office, supplying this information would identify the member of staff. Section 40(2) provides that personal data about third parties is exempt information if one of the conditions set out in section 40(3) is satisfied. Under the FOI Act disclosure of this information would breach the fair processing principle contained in the Data Protection Act (DPA), where it would be unfair to that person/is confidential. However, staff at every grade up to and including Grade 6 have at different times been awarded a special bonus.

The purchase of the vouchers is the responsibility of the Treasury Solicitor's Department and the details are not held at AGO. Under section 16 of the Act you may wish to contact that department at FOI@TSol.gsi.gov.uk

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to Rowena Collins Rice, the Director General of this Office, at the above address.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely


Freedom of Information Officer