



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.defra.gov.uk

Our ref: RFI 5775
Date: 04/10/2013

Dear [REDACTED]

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: CAGE TRAPPING AND SHOOTING

Thank you for your request for information about the assessment of competence in cage trapping and shooting, which we received on 7th September. We have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information, which is a broad category of information defined in regulation 2 of the EIRs. Public authorities are required to handle requests for environmental information under the EIRs. They give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

I enclose a copy of the information you requested:

1) The Defra procedure (or document reference number) for accreditation of approved training courses under Section 4 'Cage Trapping and Shooting' guidance (May 2012) to record competence?

Information relating to the accreditation of training courses for cage trapping and shooting of badgers is contained in the document available via the link below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69585/pb13714-badger-culling-training.pdf

2) How many courses have Defra accredited/approved regarding delivery of competence training in accordance with Section 4 'Cage Trapping and Shooting' guidance (May 2012)?

Defra have accredited two courses.

3) How do Defra monitor assessment of competence training regarding Section 4 'Cage Trapping and Shooting guidance (May 2012)?

In relation to the assessment of whether training courses were carried out adequately, Defra appointed an independent assessor who attended two instances of delivery of an accredited training course.

In relation to the assessment of whether cage trapping and shooting is being carried out according to the published guidance, Natural England are responsible for assessing this as part of their monitoring of licensees' compliance with badger control licences and attached conditions, including the Best Practice Guidance on cage trapping and shooting. This monitoring includes Natural England staff following contractors selected at random to observe all aspects of their behaviour throughout shooting operations.

4) How many (numbers and percentage of total) of those personnel issued a licence under 'Protection of Badgers Act 1992' to kill badgers under 'Class Licence WML-CL04' have undertaken approved training in accordance with Section 4 'Cage Trapping and Shooting' guidance (May 2012)?

As part of Defra's badger control policy, two companies have been issued a licence under the Protection of Badgers Act. Within these companies, all of the personnel authorised under these licences to carry out badger control by cage trapping and shooting have undertaken approved training.

In relation to the absolute number of personnel who are authorised to carry out badger control under these two licences, Defra does not hold full and current information on this. However, in order to aid planning of the monitoring of humaneness of culling operations during the pilots, indicative information on the number of authorised personnel in each area has been shared with Defra network staff. This information is as follows:

West Somerset	93 authorised personnel
West Gloucestershire	70 authorised personnel

Defra holds no further information in relation to the above question. The information requested is therefore exempt under regulation 12(4)(a) of the EIRs, which relates to information which is not held at the time when an applicant's request is received. Regulation 12(4)(a) is a qualified exception, which usually means that a public authority is required to conduct a public interest test to determine whether or not information should be disclosed or withheld. However, the Information Commissioner, who is the independent regulator for requests made under the EIRs, takes the view that a public interest test in cases where the information is not held would serve no useful purpose. Therefore, in line with the Information Commissioner's view, Defra has not conducted a public interest test in this case.

However, under our duty to advise and assist applicants in pursuance of regulation 9, I can confirm that definitive information on the number of personnel authorised to carry out badger control under the licences issued to the cull companies in West Somerset and

West Gloucestershire is held by Natural England, which can be contacted at foi@naturalengland.org.uk. Alternatively, we can transfer your request to Natural England, but before doing so we need your permission to notify it of your name and contact details. If you agree to this, please either sign and return to me the declaration at the foot of this letter or email me at the address below, quoting the reference number and date of this letter and stating that you authorize the transfer of your information request.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIRs, and in keeping with the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on www.gov.uk together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours,

Defra TB Programme
Ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A

Copyright

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Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF