



**Defence Business Services**

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Ref: FOI2020/05380

Dear Mr

12 June 2020

Thank you for your e-mail of 6 May 2020 requesting the below information:

*"1) Please provide a copy of your dataset containing centrally submitted expenses claims, covering expenses claimed to assist with or set up home working environments, for the period 01.03.20 to 05.05.20.*

*Please provide fields of this database including the amount claimed, the date claimed, the type of item claimed for and any free text description of the claim.*

*Please also provide all other fields in this database that do not contain exempt information. Exempt fields, such as fields containing personal details can be removed in full, but please replace individual names with an unique identifier (such as claimant 1, 2 etc) if possible to allow claims by the same person to be recorded without revealing the identity of the individual making them.*

*2) Please state the total amount*

- a) Claimed by your staff in expenses,*
- b) Awarded to your staff in grants.*

*To assist with setting up home working environments from 01.03.20 to 05.05.20.*

*This could include grants for items such as, but not limited to, desks or chairs for your staff or expenses claimed for such items used by homeworkers.*

*3) Please provide any other costs relating to home working to your authority that are centrally recorded (such as central purchase of laptops to issue to staff) incurred between 01.03.20 to 05.05.20.*

*Please only provide centrally recorded information (i.e. by core departmental HR) to keep this request within cost.*

*If this request would breach the cost limit, please provide responses up to the cost limit beginning with question 1. If you are unable to provide a response to all questions within cost, please provide a breakdown of your cost calculation for each question you have not completed, and the methodology you used to calculate this."*

Further to my reply of 4 June 2020, I am writing to confirm that the MOD holds some information in scope of your request. However, I should advise that we will not be able to answer your request without exceeding the appropriate cost limit.

Section 12 of the FOIA makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate cost limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

This information is not held centrally. All claims are approved by local Top Level Budget Managers across MOD, who are responsible for ensuring each claim is appropriate and retaining accompanying paperwork such as receipts, etc. Once a claim has been duly authorised by the Budget Manager most are processed automatically. If it has not been authorised correctly it is rejected and returned to the claimant for corrective action. No central record of full claims details or receipts exists, and there is no ongoing database of claims maintained or readily available.

To provide a full picture would require interrogation of the claims paperwork which in most cases would mean referring back to the claimant's employing unit or Budget Manager. To examine all potential claims would take 12-15 minutes per claim, and therefore exceed the cost limit. 1,968 claims were made in the requested period, of which a minimum of 368 have been identified which might be claims related to Working From Home, this would take at least 82 hours at a total cost of £2070.

Under Section 16 of the FOIA (Information and Assistance) I can advise the Department may be able to provide some information in the scope of your request if you were to limit your request to question 3 or to refine your request by indicating whether you were interested in any particular branch of the MOD. Although it is not guaranteed that your refined request may fall within the cost limit. Should you wish to do this, please let me know and I will be happy to consider your request again. Also under Section 16 you might be interested to know that no grants have been made, all claims are based on the reimbursement of actual expenses incurred by individuals.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 30 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely

