



Government Legal Department

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[REDACTED]

Ref No: FOI 25_124

30th July 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 22nd June 2025 containing your request for information. The Government Legal Department ("GLD") have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the Act", "FOIA")

Request

Information on late payment

This is a request under FOIA for details of instances in which Government Legal Department (including, where applicable, any agencies, bodies, or units for which it is ultimately responsible for supplier payments) has failed to pay its suppliers on time, thereby causing liabilities for late payment compensation and/or interest on late payments to be incurred for the public purse.

As the Government has made clear, late payment remains a significant issue for business and a drag on the UK economy as a whole. It is clear that, despite what the law says, many suppliers have not received timely payment or the interest and compensation for late payment to which they are entitled by statute.

Public authorities must keep information on payment in order to comply with their legal obligations, and there is a public interest in ensuring both compliance and that unpaid interest and compensation is recovered from public authorities. If proper records are kept as they ought to be, then information in this respect ought readily to be available.

The information requested below is not confidential, and its disclosure under FOIA is not capable of adversely affecting any party's commercial interests. This is because this request is aimed at data about late payment liabilities that have in fact arisen: the disclosure of this data cannot cause any additional liability to arise. We therefore do not anticipate any reasonable grounds for refusing this request.

In any event, there is strong public interest in transparency about these matters. Relevant factors in this respect include: enhancing public understanding and scrutiny of issues of significant importance to stewardship of the public purse and to economic growth; facilitating an informed debate about compliance by your authority with its contractual obligations and with Government policy; helping businesses that suffer from late payment (many of which are small and medium-sized enterprises), and encouraging improvements in payment practices by public authorities such as yours.

Request

With the above points in mind, we request under FOIA that you provide, (preferably in Microsoft Excel or an equivalent machine-readable format) the following information in respect of suppliers which were not paid in within 30 days for the period starting 1 April 2019 to the date of this request:

1. Supplier Name
2. Invoice Date
3. Gross Invoice Value
4. Payment Date
5. Late Payment Compensation or Interest Paid (if any)

Clarification:

We reiterate that this request:

- (a) is limited to information which should (if proper records are kept) be readily available from a purchase ledger system and should therefore be possible to retrieve without any difficulty and without imposing any significant burden;
- (b) relates to organisations (not individuals) who are entitled to be paid out of public funds for public services, and we do not require the disclosure of any personal information of any individual person;
- (c) does not require the disclosure of any confidential information or information to the production of which there could be any other lawful objection.

Compliance Assistance:

While we do not anticipate any grounds on which the requested information can lawfully be withheld, we nonetheless remind you of your duty under section 16 of FOIA to advise and assist requesters. If you consider that it may be impracticable to provide all the requested information within the statutory timescales, then we shall be pleased to discuss with you the reasons for this, and to see what steps may reasonably be taken in order to address these. For example, we would be content to receive the information in several parts, in another convenient format (such as that which you may already have), or to prioritise (such as by the provision of greater value items, or by date).

Response

Firstly, apologies for the delay to this response.

Pursuant to Section 1(1)(a), GLD confirms that it partially holds the information you have requested.

We do not centrally hold a list of invoices with the information you have requested and to prepare a list from the information we have would require work that would exceed the cost limit.

We have estimated that cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate cost limit, set at £600 for Central Government. This means compliance with your request would require more than 24 hours work, at the flat rate of £25 per hour.

Section 12 of the Act makes clear that a public authority (such as the GLD) is not obliged to comply with if the authority estimates the cost of complying with the request would exceed the 'appropriate limit'.

If you are able to narrow down and refine your request to a specific timeline and/or specific supplier, so that it is more likely to fall within the appropriate cost limit, we will consider it again as a new request for information

Your Rights

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask GLD for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted to GLD within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original correspondence. Please use the contact details provided at the top of this letter in order to request an internal review relating to your original request.

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
www.ICO.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

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