

19 March 2024

## **IC-292384-D8F9: Internal Review Response**

Dear P. Stead,

I write further to your email of 13 March 2024, in which you expressed dissatisfaction with the response to your recent information request, processed under case reference IC-292384-D8F9.

My name is Sarah Coggrave and I am a Senior Information Access Officer. I can confirm that I have had no prior involvement in the handling of this request. My role is to review the application of the Freedom of Information Act (2000) FOIA in relation to your request.

Section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) requires the publication of a code of practice, designed to assist public authorities handle requests under the FOIA.

This guide recommends that public authorities put in place an internal review process for FOIA responses, which our guide suggests should be triggered whenever a requester expresses dissatisfaction with the outcome of a request they have made.

### **Review**

The purpose of this review is to look again at your request and the response that was provided to you, to ensure it was correct and that any exemptions applied were appropriate.

Your request was as follows:

*Please tell me how many case officers are employed by the ICO who deal with FOI requests. Please subdivide the number by seniority using the job titles the ICO themselves use.*

The request handler provided the number of staff who deal with FOI requests made to the ICO. These staff all work within the Information Access Team.

When provided with this information you stated that there had been a misunderstanding, and that you were looking for numbers from 'the ICO as a whole, not just the Information Access Team.'

It appears that there may be some confusion over how tasks at the ICO are delegated to different teams. Any individual member of staff or team might assist with FOI requests by helping to locate information, providing consultation responses and/or by referring FOI requests they receive within the course of their work to the Information Access Team. However, it is the Information Access Team alone who are responsible for processing and responding to these requests.

Please also note that FOI complaints (i.e. complaints made about the handling of FOI requests by public authorities) are not handled by the Information Access Team, but by our FOI Complaints Team, so if your interest is in this side of our work, rather than requests made to the ICO, please let us know.

The ICO employs 1121 staff at present. Therefore if you want to request breakdowns for other departments then please specify any relevant departments and/or job titles, so we can handle this as a new request. You can find out more about [our work and the different departments here](#) and [our request submission page](#) provides further information about submitting information requests to the ICO and how these are dealt with.

Having reviewed the request and the original response I consider that it was reasonable for the request handler to interpret your request as relating only to those members of staff who handle FOI requests, i.e. members of the Information Access Team. Having checked the information provided I can confirm that this is accurate, and am satisfied that the response was correct and included all necessary information.

I also considered Section 16 (duty to provide advice and assistance). The request, as originally worded, was straightforward and the requested information was provided in a clear, understandable format. The request handler could not have anticipated that you had intended the request to be interpreted differently, and it is unclear what advice or assistance they could have provided to pre-empt this.

However, I appreciate that the response was not what you were expecting, so with this in mind I hope that the above explanation has helped to clarify this for you. If not please let me know.

### **Complaint procedure**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of this review you can make a formal complaint with the ICO in its capacity as the regulator of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please follow the link below to submit your complaint:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

### **Your rights**

Our [privacy notice](#) explains what we do with the personal data you provide to us and what your rights are, with a specific entry, for example, for [an information requester](#). Our retention policy can be found [here](#).

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Coggrave

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