

16 May 2024

REFERENCE: FOI\24\51

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your request for information dated 24th April 2024 and detailed below.

- Knowing that the previous prisoner ombudsman was leaving office on February 2024 what actions were put in place to fill this position by the DoJ or responsible department?
- How many staff currently are employed in the ombudsman's office? and can this be broken down by investigation officer etc.
- What is the recommended / appropriate number of staff in the ombudsman's office?

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives you two rights of access when you write to us asking for information. You have the right to know whether we hold recorded information falling in scope of your request, and you have the right to receive this recorded information subject to cost limit or exemption.

The information you have requested is provided below:

- Knowing that the previous prisoner ombudsman was leaving office on February 2024 what actions were put in place to fill this position by the DoJ or responsible department?

The Minister of Justice is responsible for appointing the Prisoner Ombudsman. In anticipation of the Ombudsman's term finishing at the end of February 2024 the Department advertised the position and following interviews the role was offered to an applicant in December. Unfortunately, this person informed the Department in January that they had decided not to take up the offer. In the absence of another candidate being found suitable for the role, the Minister agreed to an interim arrangement whereby the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice Jacqui Durkin will provide support to the Ombudsman's Office while the Department run another recruitment competition.

- How many staff currently are employed in the ombudsman's office? and can this be broken down by investigation officer etc.

1 DP Senior Investigation Officer

1 DP Governance

5 Investigation Officers

1 Executive Officer (admin)

1 Administrative Officer (admin)

- What is the recommended / appropriate number of staff in the ombudsman's office?

The number of staff required in the Office is currently under review.

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. If you request an internal review please do so in writing stating the reasons to the address above.

If following an internal review you were to remain dissatisfied you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner and ask the Commissioner to investigate whether the DOJ has complied with the terms of the FOIA. You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

The Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out.

Further details on the role of the Information Commissioner and the handling of appeals can be found at: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Records & Information Manager