

20 March 2025

REFERENCE: FOI\25\15

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your request for information dated 4 February 2025 and detailed below.

- (1) A copy of the review report of the Northern Ireland Law Commission conducted by the Department of Justice (DoJ), which was mentioned in the Hansard record of the NI Assembly on 11th June 2014.*
- (2) Any related documents, briefing notes, or correspondence regarding this review from January 2013 to December 2014.*

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 Department has considered your request in accordance with these obligations. With regard to question (1), document 1 in the attached documents refers to that part of your request.

In relation to question (2), the Department has estimated that to locate, retrieve and extract the information that might be relevant to your request would involve work considerably more than the appropriate limit. This is due to the large number of

documents potentially in scope. The appropriate limit is specified in regulations and for central government is set at £600. This represents an estimated cost of one person spending 24 working hours, at a cost of £25.00 per hour, to determine whether the Department holds the information, and then retrieve and extract that information.

546 files have been identified as *potentially* containing relevant information. It is estimated that to search through each file manually for relevant information will take 1 member of staff approximately **5** minutes, giving a total of approximately **46** hours work. At a cost of £25 per hour, this equates to **£1,150** which is higher than the appropriate limit. Consequently, the department is not obliged to comply with your request under section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act, 2000.

Following agreement received from you on 10 February 2025, question (2) was revised to:

(3) *Any related documents, briefing notes, or correspondence to or from the Justice Minister regarding this review from January 2013 to December 2014.*

The information you have requested is attached, subject to some material being withheld from disclosure.

Section 40(2) (Personal information of third parties)

Some personal information in the form of names of junior staff of the Commission and the Department of Justice has been withheld from disclosure under Section 40(2) (Personal information) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Document two also withheld some information relating to a personnel issue from disclosure. The Data Protection Act 2018 prohibits the release of personal data that relates to third parties which could, if released, identify the third party to whom it relates. Disclosure would contravene the first and second principle of the Data Protection Act in that the data would be processed unfairly and in a manner incompatible with the original purpose. Further, none of the conditions in Article 6 of the Act are met to authorise lawful disclosure.

Section 40 (2) provides an absolute exemption and there is no requirement for the completion of a public interest test.

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