



University of East Anglia

Information Services Directorate

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11 April 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_17-073)

We have now considered your request of 15 March 2017 as clarified on 17 March for the following information:

“...can you send me a list of all suppliers with spend less than £500,000 and the value you bought from them in your last financial year.”

[Clarified on 17 March to include only on-going (i.e. non-one off) suppliers]

Unfortunately, on this occasion it is not possible to provide any of the requested information.

As noted in our correspondence of 05 April with you, the requested information comprises records of close to 2800 separate suppliers. Whilst the annual expenditure with any particular supplier may not be commercially sensitive or prejudicial to their commercial interests if released, we cannot determine this without contacting the supplier, and we cannot apply the appropriate exemption for commercially sensitive information on their behalf without receiving direct evidence from them.

We believe that the work to contact close to 2800 suppliers would place an unreasonable burden on this organisation. Even if only 5 minutes were spent per supplier, we would have to spend over 230 hours processing this request. Whilst the information which may be subject to an exemption can be easily isolated, there is simply so much of it that to determine whether any exemption applies would place an unreasonable burden on UEA.

We have therefore concluded, as indicated in our email of 05 April, that this request is ‘vexatious’ and, pursuant to s.14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), we are under no obligation to comply with this request.

We understand that you certainly had no intention of submitting a vexatious request nor are there any reasons, other than the burden on the organisation, for us to find this request vexatious. As noted in our email of 05 April, were you to accept a list of figures, for example, absent the supplier name, there would be no need for us to determine if an exemption applied, our burden would lessen substantially, and we would be able and happy to fulfil such a request.

We are sorry we have not been able to respond to your request on this occasion. If you would like further information on how we have arrived at this decision, please

see the [Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\) guidance](#)¹ regarding vexatious requests.

You have the right of appeal against this decision. If you wish to appeal, please set out in writing your grounds of appeal and send to me at the address noted in the heading to this letter.

You must appeal our decision within 60 calendar days of the date of this letter. Any appeal received after that date will not be considered nor acknowledged. This policy has been reviewed and approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

You also have a subsequent right of appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office. Further information is available on their website:

https://ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us, or by telephone on 0303 123 1113.

Please quote our reference given at the head of this letter in all correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Dave Palmer
Information Policy and Compliance Manager
University of East Anglia

¹ <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1198/dealing-with-vexatious-requests.pdf>