

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Request Reference FoI/24/247

Office Supplies

Information Requested:

The details I require are:

- Spend on Office supplies and associated products for the below financial years.
- 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023
- 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024
- Start date & duration of Contract?
- Is there an extension clause in the contract and, if so, the duration of the extension?
- Has a decision been made yet on whether the contract is to be either extended or renewed?
- Who is the senior officer (outside of procurement) responsible for the contract?
- Name of Incumbent Supplier?
- How long have you traded with them?
- If you publish your register of contracts and purchasing, can you please provide a website link.
- In addition, can you confirm if you have a contract in place for Tail End Spend.

The requestor subsequently added the following to the initial request:

To clarify I would like information on your spend on Office Supplies, Stationery, Paper, Ink and Toner, etc

Ideally all spend that is identified under the following CPV Code.

30000000 – Office and computing machinery, equipment and supplies except furniture and software packages I had added a description below.

Office and computing machinery, equipment and supplies except furniture and software packages code description The category “Office and computing machinery, equipment and supplies except furniture and software packages” encompasses a wide range of products and items that are essential for office operations and computing needs. It includes office machinery, equipment, and supplies, excluding computers, printers, and furniture. This category covers items such as photocopiers, scanners, shredders, paper, stationery, writing instruments, and other office essentials. Additionally, it includes computer equipment and supplies, such as monitors, keyboards, mice, cables, and other peripherals Tail-end spend refers to ad hoc spending and uncategorized supplier purchases that are low in volume, frequency or

value. It is also defined as the 20% of non-core transactions that are left unmanaged. Tail-end spend usually accumulates through low-value transactions companies engage in with their suppliers, though they do not occur frequently. The most common definition for tail-end spend is the 80/20 rule, where tail-end spend is typically defined as 80% of the company's transactions that only account for around 20% of the actual total company spend.

Response Details:

The spend on office supplies and associated products for the 2022–23 financial year was £9m, and for the 2023–24 financial year, it was £7m.

In completing a search for the information requested on contractual details for office equipment, Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (the UHB) has confirmed that this information is not centrally recorded or collated. To retrieve the information requested would require a manual search through individual records and the UHB considers that this would exceed the limit set within the Appropriate Limit and Fees Regulations 2004. The UHB has therefore relied upon the section 12 exemption of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA 2000) ('Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit') and is refusing your request for the following reasons.

It should first be noted that multiple requests within a single item of correspondence are considered separate requests for the purposes of section 12(4) of the FOIA 2000, as confirmed in *Fitzsimmons v Information Commissioner* [2008] UKIT EA/2007/0124.

When a public authority is estimating whether the appropriate limit is likely to be exceeded for the purposes of regulation 5 of the Fees Regulations as prescribed by section 12(4) of the FOIA 2000, it can include the costs of complying with two or more requests if these are:

- made by one person, or by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign; and
- received by the public authority within any period of 60 working days.

Since all of these requests were sent by the same individual and received on 24 April 2024, the UHB believes these conditions to be satisfied.

Regulation 5(2) of the Fees Regulations equally requires that aggregated requests relate 'to any extent' to the same or similar information. This test is likely to be met where requests possess an overarching theme or have a common thread running between them with respect to the nature of the information sought. And since each of the requests relates to details for contracts with office equipment suppliers, the UHB considers the requirement of similar information sought to be met due to the common themes present.

The UHB has estimated that to complete the work needed to respond to the aggregated requests would exceed the time limit as set within the Fees Regulations to respond to a request made under the FOIA 2000. Under the Act there is an allowance of two and a half days, or 18 hours, to comply with a request and the cost limit set within the Fees Regulations for this amount of work is £450 for the UHB. The Fees

Regulations specify that the cost of complying with a request must be calculated at the rate of £25 per hour.

In light of the above considerations, the UHB is refusing your requests for information in accordance with section 12(4) of the FOIA 2000.

In line with our duty to advise and assist under section 16 of the FOIA 2000, the UHB may be able to provide contractual details for specific contracts concluded with office equipment suppliers upon request.

For a register of contracts and purchasing, please refer to the following weblink: [NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership \(NWSSP\) – Procurement](#).

NWSSP does not have a contract in place for tail-end spend; it would look at total value when putting a new contract in place.