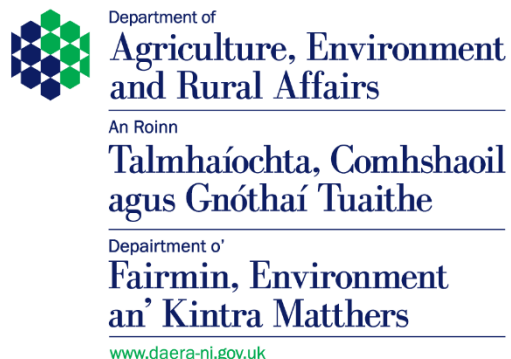


**Food, Farming and Rural Affairs Group**  
College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise  
(CAFRE)



Our Reference: DAERA/26-105

By e-mail to: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [whatdotheyknow.com](http://whatdotheyknow.com)

CAFRE, Greenmount Campus  
45 Tirgracy Road  
Antrim  
BT41 4PS

Email: [CAFRE.CorporateAdmin@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:CAFRE.CorporateAdmin@daera-ni.gov.uk)

Date: 12 March 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000**

With regard to your request for information received by CAFRE on 13 February 2026 which sought the following:

- 1. Management Hierarchy and Department Information**
- 2. Recruitment Agency Spend (2024/25 and 2025/26)**

I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds some of the information. Responses to the information requested are detailed in Annexes A and B of this reply.

The department is unable to disclose some of the information you requested, as it considers Section 43 (2) Commercial Interest to be engaged. In these instances, the Department is legislatively required to consider the public interest in disclosure. An associated Public Interest Test has been conducted and is attached for your information at Annex C.

The supply of information in response to a freedom of information request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. Under UK copyright law you can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs.

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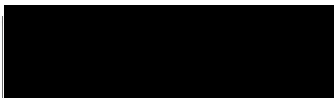
If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department.

If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing [daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk) or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE, SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

Yours faithfully,



College Service Branch, CAFRE

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**Request 1. Management Hierarchy and Department Information:** A current organisational chart, including the names and job titles of all managerial staff; The specific departments or functional areas each manager oversees; Contact telephone numbers for each department; The names of all senior leadership team members and middle leaders, along with their respective positions and the subjects or areas they manage.

**Response:** I can advise that this information is currently publicly available on the CAFRE Website and may be accessed via <https://www.cafre.ac.uk/about-us/our-staff/>

**Request 2(i). Recruitment Agency Spend (2024/25 and 2025/26):** A breakdown of all Recruitment Agency spend for the 2024/25 academic year and the current 2025/26 academic year. Please provide this segmented by: Department; Contract type; Agency used;

**Response:** Please see **Annex B Request 2(i) CAFRE Recruitment Agency Spend (2024/25 and 2025/26)** which outlines CAFRE spend with agency providers.

\*Note Agency/Agencies used are not identified due to Section 43(2) exemption.

**Request 2(ii). Confirmation of whether you currently have any contracts or agreements in place with recruitment agencies (e.g., Preferred Supplier Lists).**

**Response:** The Department of Finance (DoF) has established a number of Contracts with Recruitment Agencies to provide Agency Workers to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Departments, Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies and other Participating Bodies.

**Request 2(iii). If applicable, please include the expiry dates of these agreements.**

**Response:** I can advise that this information is currently publicly available. The DoF framework which is the public domain may be accessed via [Provision of Temporary Agency Workers for Northern Ireland Civil Service, Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies | Department of Finance](#), and confirms that the *Agency Workers Contract 2021* started in 2021 and is due to end on 29 March 2026.

**Table 1: Request 2(i) CAFRE Recruitment Agency Spend (Academic Years 2024/2025 and 2025/2026)**

	CAFRE Recruitment Agency Spend (2024/2025 and 2025/2026) *	
	Agency Spend September 2024 - June 2025	Agency Spend September 2025 - to Date (End of January 2026)
<b>Agency Spend</b>	<b>£2,024,979</b>	<b>£1,210,655</b>

**Contract Type:** All Spend is under NICS Agency Worker Contract 2021

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### **Public Interest Test – FOI DAERA/25-99**

Section 43(2) – prejudice to commercial interests.

This exemption covers –

- when complying with the request would prejudice or would be likely to prejudice someone's commercial interests.

### **The exemption to be considered here is 43(2) – commercial interests.**

This is a qualified exemption, and a public interest test applies here.

Qualified exemptions do not justify withholding information unless, following a proper assessment, the balance of the public interest test comes down against disclosure, i.e. if the exemption applies would the public interest in withholding outweigh the public interest in disclosing?

Section 43(2) is a prejudice-based exemption which says that information is exempt if its disclosure under FOIA would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any legal person (including the public authority holding it).

A commercial interest relates to a legal person's ability to participate competitively in a commercial activity.

If you hold commercial information, it does not necessarily follow that this information is exempt from disclosure under section 43(2). It is necessary to show how and why its disclosure has the potential to prejudice someone's commercial interests.

### **Reasons why the public interest would favour disclosure:**

- The right of the public to have access to information.
- Accountability for the use of public funds.
- It is not sufficient for the Department to simply speculate about the prejudice which might be caused to the third party's commercial interests, as set out within the case of *Derry City Council v Information Commissioner EA/2006/0014*, (11 December 2006). Without any evidence, the decision would be to release the information in full.

### **Reasons why the public interest would favour withholding:**

- The case of *Derry City Council v Information Commissioner EA/2006/0014*, (11 December 2006) demonstrates that it is necessary to consult with the third party for their exact views in all but the most exceptional circumstances.
- In following this process, the Department has consulted with third party agencies. Feedback received advised that release of spend could be potentially harmful and allow competitors access to sensitive information and therefore an unfair business advantage, especially as CAFRE is currently part of the NICS framework Invitation To Tender (ITT) which is in a live bid state.

### **Conclusion**

Following consideration of the Public Interest Test the Department has decided that the majority of the information can be released, but under Section 43 (2) agency names and individual spend with each agency have not been provided. A combined spend across agency providers has been provided.

Responses to the information requested are detailed in Annexes A and B.

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