

Reference Number: DAERA/26-606
Request Details:
Documentation relating to actions taken
with regards to work balances between
Grade 7 commands.



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

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Northern Ireland Environment Agency

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08 September 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I refer to your request for information received by the Department on 10 August 2026 which sought the following information:

1. Copies of any documentation which in any way pertain to what action has been or was to be taken to address this issue and to provide greater support specifically targeting those work areas highlighted as most likely to be struggling, this situation appears to remain entirely unaddressed and unactioned since 2019 despite being identified as a significant issue, despite the creation of so many new Grade 7 or analogous posts since this time.

2. A copy of all independent, underpinning NICS evaluations/validations of the defensible need and justification for the creation of all Grade 7 and analogous grades across Natural Environment Division (NED) since 20022, as to the appropriateness of the requirement for the posts to be at this grade and the independent validation/evaluation of the level of work, accountability and level of responsibility necessitating this.

3. A copy of all risk assessments in place specifically pertaining to the management and mitigation of work related stress/anxiety across and between the divisional

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Grade 7 and analogous commands in Natural Environment Division (NED) and NIEA as a whole.

4.A copy of all documents in place that address considerations/management of work loading across Grade 7 and analogous commands in NED and how this important issue is planned for, managed and mitigated across NED and also across NIEA as a whole.

5.A copy of all documents that set out the metrics and analytics used and monitored to assess, consider and evaluate appropriate work loading across and between Grade 7 and analogous commands in NED and across NIEA as a whole.

6.A copy of all documentation that sets out the reasoning why in the creation of Grade 7 and analogous commands since 2018 and the effective splitting of multiple Grade 7/Analogous commands across NED since this time, that it was considered defensible and appropriate to strategically ignore the single largest command across NIEA, Regional Operations.

7.A copy of all documentation including emails and notes that set out and address why Regional Operations as the single largest Grade 7 analogous command in NIEA is considered defensibly balanced in terms of work loading and responsibility with the multitude of other commands across NED and also across NIEA.

8.A copy of the assessments in place that explain the appropriateness of existing work loading and responsibilities within/between and across the Grade 7/analogous commands of my current Grade 6 line management.

9.A copy of any documentation that sets out how and using what metrics, plans are currently being enacted to ensure appropriate equity in work loadings across G7 and analogous commands across NED and NIEA as a whole and time line for when this will be completed.

I am writing to advise you that following a search of our records I have established that the information you requested is not held by the Department.

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.

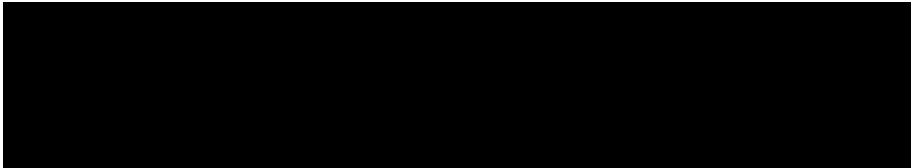
If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department. If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection &

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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 sincerely,



Natural Environment Division

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