



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Central Management Branch
Room 426, Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Ballymiscaw
Belfast BT4 3SB
Telephone: 028 9052 5386
E-mail : [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Your ref:
Our ref: DAERA/2018-0089

Date: 14 May 2018

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Act 2000

I am writing to advise that the Department has now completed its search for the information you requested on 13 April 2018.

You asked:

"..provide me with all the material held by the department about the resignation of Andrew Crawford as Spad in January 2017.

Including a copy of his resignation letter, details of why the permanent secretary agreed to pay him severance pay from public funds despite voluntarily choosing to leave his role and any other material held by the department in relation to this matter."

I can confirm that the department holds the information you have requested. I wish to advise you however that some of the information cannot be disclosed as it is considered to be personal data of which you are not the data subject (Section 40(2)).

When Section 40(2) is considered to be engaged the Department is obliged to undertake a Fairness Test, and this is attached at Annex A. A copy of the information which can be disclosed is also attached.

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 write to The Review Section, The Department of

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.



Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Information Management Branch, Room 507, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Ballymiscaw, BELFAST, BT4 3SB, 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.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]
Central Management Branch
enc.

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DAERA/2018-0089 - Fairness Test

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Request: Information relating to Dr Andrew Crawford's resignation as SPAD, resignation letter and details concerning payment of severance.

1. The nature of the information itself:

Staff names and contact numbers, member of the public names and contact details and papers concerning the resignation and severance payment to SPAD.

2. The possible / likely consequences of disclosure on the individuals:

It is likely that the release of personal details relating to all third parties would cause undue distress. There is a reasonable expectation that personal details will not be released to the general public for those not involved in decisions on how public money is spent.

3. The circumstances in which the information was obtained:

A resignation letter was sent by Dr Crawford to the then DAERA Minister and Permanent Secretary, notifying them of his resignation from post. The papers were generated within, or received by the Department following the resignation.

4. Whether the information has been or remains in the public domain:

The fact that Dr Crawford resigned is a public fact which was widely reported in the press. Personal details of staff, Dr Crawford and members of the public who wrote to the Department have not been, and are not now in the public domain.

5. Any legitimate interests in the public having access to the information versus the rights of the data subject

Disclosure may demonstrate openness and transparency in the handling of this matter which was reported in the press. The expectation of less senior staff to protection of their privacy and the established practice of DAERA in not releasing those details into the public domain supports the withholding of that information. There is no legitimate interest in the public having access to the personal details of Dr Crawford.

Conclusion

Having considered all of the abovementioned elements, the Department has concluded that it would be unfair to disclose information that is considered to be personal data (e.g. staff names, Dr Crawford's personal details etc.). Given the reasonable expectations held by the individuals concerned that their data will not be shared contrary to the provisions outlined in the DPA, balanced alongside the legitimate interest of the public having access to that information it is considered that it would be unfair to disclose personal data as outlined above. This being the case Section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. Given the interest in the issue and the desire to ensure transparency in public matters the Department is releasing information where it is only fair to do so.

11/05/2018

CMB – Private Office