4 April 2016

Reference number: For - 287

REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

I am writing in response to the request you made to BBSRC under the Freedom of Information Act, which was received on 12 March 2016.

Statement of information requested

In 2015 the BBSRC settlement agreement template changed radically. Prior to this it only covered severance payments, but after this date it included, for the first time, redundancy payments. This change had an impact on 1,000s of employees and former employees being made redundant from scientific establishments. I would like to be provided with underlying information that was used to inform these important changes to your template. So for example, the inclusion of redundancy payments into these agreement would have significant consequences for provisions under the civil service compensation scheme. What information did the Joint Superannuation Scheme providers give to BBSRC about how lumping together severance and redundancy payments into a single payment would impact on their pension scheme? This is only one example of the information that would have been required to make these changes.

Background

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) is one of seven Research Councils that work together as Research Councils UK (RCUK). It is funded from the Government’s Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. BBSRC’s budget for 2014/15 was £509M and it supports around 1,600 scientists and 2,000 research students in universities and institutes in the UK. Information about BBSRC’s mission can be found on our website at http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/organisation/mission.aspx.

UK Shared Business Services (UK SBS) provides a range of services, including IT, to BBSRC and other public sector organisations. UK SBS enters contracts on its clients behalf and provides services to them.

Duty to confirm or deny

BBSRC holds some information requested.

Requested Information

The Cabinet Office issued revised guidance on Settlement Agreements in Feb 2015 and this prompted us to review and update our template. This was done in consultation with the Trade Unions. The Settlement Agreement does not lump agreed severance payments and payments under voluntary exits together. It states they may be ‘and/or’; but this will depend on the circumstances of each case.

Please use the following link for further information on the Cabinet Office guidance; https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/395393/Settlement_Agreements_Civil_Service_guidance_01_Feb_2015_FINAL.pdf

As stated, in the response to your previous For (For reference 283) the Settlement Agreement is a template document and can be adapted to fit the circumstances of each case.
If you have any further questions, please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely

BBSRC Freedom of Information Officer

Publication: please note that this response to your request may be published on a public website.

Complaints Process

If you are dissatisfied with how we have handled your request, you may register a formal complaint with the BBSRC Complaints Officer at complaints.officer@bbsrc.ac.uk, who will conduct an internal review.

If you are not happy with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner, Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, Tel: 01625 545 745, https://ico.org.uk/.