

[REDACTED]

28 June 2017.

Re: FOI request 2017/ 178

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your request for access to records held by the Department of Education and Skills under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014.

You have requested the following information in relation to education and training programmes offered to staff from 1 January 2016 to date, as follows:

- a) What courses were offered to staff?
- b) How many participated in each course?
- c) What was the cost and duration of each course?
- d) And what company/institute provided the education or training course?
- e) How many staff are currently employed by the department?

Following further consideration of your request further to my correspondence of 12th May 2017, I believe that the nature of certain information requested by you is commercially sensitive. I am therefore refusing the information requested at a), b) and c) above in accordance with Section 36.1.b) and c) of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014.

I propose however to provide the following information to you which I hope is helpful:

- Types of courses provided to staff in the Department of Education and Skills
- Companies/institutes who have provided education/ training courses from January 2016 to end-May 2017
- Number of Staff currently employed by the Department
- Total training expenditure, Department of Education and Skills from January 2016 to end-May 2017

By way of background/ narrative and to address the first point above, I wish to explain that the Department's Staff Training and Development Unit is responsible for the provision of training for Department staff which includes its Administrative staff, the Department's Inspectorate, the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) and specialist staff employed in certain business areas including the I.T., Legal, Financial and Planning/ Building Units of the Department.

Training for administrative and specialist staff is provided, in general, on the basis of identified demand, evolving business needs and Corporate developments. Some specialist

training and training in respect of the Inspectorate and the NEPS is organised centrally in those areas, with access to the Training budget as required.

There is no exhaustive list of courses which are provided, as training is provided in accordance with evolving business demands, but I can advise that training which is provided includes Management/ Leadership development; Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for members of the Inspectorate, NEPS and technical staff; targeted training in priority areas such as Project Management and Business Process Improvement as well as training to address ongoing business needs such as Financial Management training, IT training/ technical training for IT specialist staff, Health and Safety training and Irish Language training.

Separately, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform provide a Graduate Development Programme for recently-recruited Administrative Officers.

The Department also aims to foster a learning culture by providing support for staff who pursue academic programs in their own time through the Scheme for the Advance Payment and Refund of Academic Fees. Courses funded must be relevant to the public service employment of the staff member and must lead to a second or third level educational, professional or vocational qualification or a qualification in a language other than English. Expenditure under this scheme in 2016 was €140,564.

I have enclosed the following records for information, as outlined earlier:

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Doc No.	Date of Record	Description of Record	Granted/Part Granted/Refused	Section of the Act
1	26/06/2017	Companies/institutes who have provided education/ training courses from January 2016 to end-May 2017	Granted	-
2	26/06/2017	Number of Staff currently employed by the Department	Granted	-
3	26/06/2017	Total expenditure on Corporate training, Department of Education and Skills from January 2016 to end-May 2017	Granted	-

I hope the above/ enclosed information is of assistance to you. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this request, you are entitled to seek an internal review under Section 14(7) of the Act. You must submit a request for an internal review within four weeks of the date of this letter.

To submit a request for an internal review, please write to:

Ms Kathleen McAuliffe
FOI Unit
Department of Education & Skills
Marlborough St
Dublin 1.

Yours sincerely,



Eamonn Ward,
Decision Maker.