

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Fees Summary

The FOI fees provisions have two purposes:

1. To allow a public authority to ascertain whether it has to comply with an FOI request?
2. To enable it to ascertain how much it can charge for supplying the information?

The Basic Rules

If the cost of finding the information subject of an FOI request will be:

Below the Appropriate Limit - you cannot charge the applicant anything other than Disbursements incurred in supplying the information

Note : Cannot charge for staff time taken in finding or supplying the information

Over the Appropriate Limit – you don't have to comply with the request but if you choose to do so, you can only charge the Regulation 4 Costs (see below) plus Disbursements

Appropriate Limit:

- Central Government £600
- Others (incl. Local Government) £450

Disbursements: The costs incurred in:

- Complying with the applicants request for the information in a particular format (e.g. summary, inspection etc)
- Reproducing any document
- Postage and other forms of transmission e.g. fax

Working out the Appropriate Limit i.e. the £450/600 limit?

Upon receiving the request, estimate the staff time to be taken do any or all of the following and cost the time at £25 per hour (Regulation 4 Costs):

- ♣ Determining whether you hold the information
- ♣ Locating the information or a document which may contain the information
- ♣ Retrieving the information, or a document, which may contain the information
- ♣ Extracting the information from a document containing it

Cumulative or Campaign Requests:

These are: Two or more requests made by:

one person or different persons in acting concert or in pursuance of a campaign

The Rule: When calculating whether the Appropriate Limit has/may be reached in complying with any one request, you aggregate the cost of complying with all of them. However must be :

- two or more requests relating to same or similar information and
- received within any sixty consecutive working day period