

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Decision notice

Date: 4 November 2019

Public Authority: Oxford City Council
Address: St Aldate's Chambers
109 St Aldate's
Oxford
OX1 1DS

Decision (including any steps ordered)

1. The complainant requested information from Oxford City Council ("the Council") relating to contracts for the provision of day services.
2. The Commissioner's decision is that the Council has failed to respond to the request within 20 working days and has therefore breached section 10 of the FOIA.
3. The Commissioner requires the Council to take the following steps to ensure compliance with the legislation.
 - The Council must issue a substantive response to the request in accordance with its obligations under the FOIA.
4. The Council must take these steps within 35 calendar days of the date of this decision notice. Failure to comply may result in the Commissioner making written certification of this fact to the High Court pursuant to section 54 of the Act and may be dealt with as a contempt of court.

Request and response

5. On 9 August 2019 the complainant wrote to the Council and requested information in the following terms:

"I would like access to the information relating to any of the following subject:-

The Oxford City Council Administration Records;

Specifically held in the 'County Homeless Provision Department';

A copy of the;

'Day Services Provisions Contract between O'Hanlon House & Oxford Council',

From the following years:-

From April 2017 to April 2018,

And April 2018 to April 2019,

And April 2019 to April 2020. (ie: the current Contract).

I ask for the information to be provided in the following preferred format:

A paper copy in permanent form eg: a photocopy of computer printout."

6. The Council wrote to the complainant to acknowledge this request on 15 August 2019.
7. On 11 September 2019 the Council explained to the complainant that it understood that there was a meeting due to be arranged relating to the request. Therefore, the Council stated that it would consider the request for information following this meeting.
8. By the date of this notice the complainant had not received a substantive response to his information request.

Scope of the case

9. The complainant contacted the Commissioner on 17 September 2019 to complain about the Council's failure to respond to his request.

10. The Commissioner contacted the Council on 16 October 2019 reminding it of its responsibilities and asking it to provide a substantive response to the complainant within 10 working days.
11. The Council did not respond to the Commissioner's correspondence. A follow up call to the Council also failed to elicit a response.
12. The Commissioner also contacted the complainant on 16 October 2019 to explain that the Council had been given 10 working days from 16 October 2019 within which to provide a response to his request.
13. The scope of this notice and the following analysis is to consider whether the Council has complied with section 10 of the FOIA.

Reasons for decision

14. Section 10 of FOIA states that:

Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled –

- (a) *To be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and*
 - (b) *If that is the case, to have that information communicated to him.*
15. The Commissioner considers that the request in question fulfilled the above criteria and therefore constituted a valid request for recorded information under the FOIA.
16. Section 10 of the FOIA states that responses to requests made under the Act must be provided, "*promptly and in any event not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt.*"
17. The Council did not provide a substantive response to the request within 20 working days of receipt. Therefore, the Commissioner's decision is that the Council has breached section 10 of the FOIA.
18. At paragraph 3 above the Council is now required to respond to the complainant's request.

Right of Appeal

19. Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from:

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)
GRC & GRP Tribunals,
PO Box 9300,
LEICESTER,
LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0300 1234504

Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: grc@justice.gov.uk

Website: www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber

20. If you wish to appeal against a decision notice, you can obtain information on how to appeal along with the relevant forms from the Information Tribunal website.
21. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

Signed

**Ben Tomes
Team Manager
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF**