From: Freedom of Information  
Sent: 08 July 2020 16:02  
To:  
Subject: Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/229)

Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/229)

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 16 June 2020, reference K/20/229.

Your request read:

“1. The total amount spent by the University on recruitment agency fees over the last five years. If the date could please be split by year and post.
2. How many posts you recruited by using an external recruitment agency.
3. For each time a recruitment agency was used, how long has the successful applicant stayed in the advertised role.”

The University of Leeds may hold some of information relevant to your request. However, we consider that to respond to your request as it is currently framed would exceed the cost limit as set out in Section 12(1) of the FOI Act. Section 12(1) states that a public authority can refuse a request if complying with it would exceed the appropriate limit of £450. For the purposes of FOI, time spent on the permitted activities is calculated at the flat rate of £25 per person, per hour. The appropriate limit therefore represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours to determine whether the information is held, and to locate, retrieve and extract the information.

The information you have requested is not held in a single, central record. Instead, some information is held by our central HR team, and some is held by our Purchasing department. Some of the information you have requested is only held in individual records (e.g. per contract).

We do not hold a central record of spend on recruitment agency fees per post. In order to identify and locate this information, individual invoices/transactions would need to be reviewed. As we do not hold a centralised list of all posts which were filled via a recruitment agency, we would need to review all posts recruited to in the last five years, in order to establish where there was recruitment agency involvement. We typically recruit to hundreds of roles every year, and as such it is likely that thousands of roles would need to be reviewed in order to identify those which are relevant to your request. While it may be immediately apparent in some cases that a recruitment agency was involved, in some cases this may be less obvious. For instance, a senior role for which applicants were sought via a specialist recruitment company will be more readily identifiable as relevant to your request than a lower graded role which was initially advertised externally then later filled via an agency. Further work would then be required to track those individuals who were recruited, in order to establish how long they stayed in the advertised role – as this information is not reported on. As such, it is not possible at this stage for us to
provide an estimate of how long it would take to locate the relevant information. However, it is clear that this would take far in excess of the 18-hour appropriate limit set out at section 12.

We do keep a central record the total spend on recruitment agencies per accounting year. A request limited to a particular salary grade and/or department, and a shorter timeframe, would limit the number of relevant posts and therefore be likely reduce the total amount of time required. You may therefore wish to consider submitting a refined request, taking this into account.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions about this email, however, please do not hesitate to contact us on foi@leeds.ac.uk

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you can request an Internal Review. Requests for Internal Review should be made in writing using the following contact information:

Post: Mr D Wardle  
Deputy Secretary  
The University of Leeds  
Leeds  
LS2 9JT

Email: foi@leeds.ac.uk

Requests for Internal Review should be submitted within 40 working days of receiving the University’s response to your request. Further information about how the University manages Freedom of Information requests and about our complaints procedure is also available on our website (www.leeds.ac.uk).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review/complaints procedure provided by the University. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Kind regards

Chloe Wilkins  
Freedom of Information Officer

Secretariat  
University of Leeds