From: Freedom of Information  
Sent: 05 March 2021 16:06  
To:  
Subject: Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/098)

Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/098)

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 16 February 2021, reference K/21/098.

Your request read:

1. The amount that the university has spent, in total, on subscriptions for online learning platforms, e.g. Zoom and Microsoft Teams, for the past three calendar years (2018, 2019, 2020). Please specify which platforms and the amount spent on each. (If this information is recorded in academic years or by term instead, please give me the total spent in the academic years 2017-2018; 2018-2019; 2019-2020, or the total in each term that falls within these years.)
2. The amount that the university expects to have spent on online learning platforms by the end of the calendar year 2021. Please specify which platforms and the amount spent on each. (If this information is recorded in academic years or by term instead, please give me the projected spending for the academic year 2020-2021, or the total for each term that falls within these years.)
3. If this information is not available, how much has the university spent thus far this year on these platforms? Please specify which platforms and the amount spent on each.
4. How much does the university envision it will spend on these platforms in the calendar years 2022 and 2023? (If this information is recorded in academic years or by term instead, please give me the total spent projected spending for the academic years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, or the total for each term that falls within these years.)
5. Has the university discussed integrating remote teaching into its educational provision in the future, once there is no longer a clear need for social distancing measures to be in place?
6. If yes, please provide me with any relevant recorded information (such as minutes or papers) that contains discussions on this topic.
7. Have any individual faculties in the university discussed integrating remote teaching into their educational provision in the future, once there is no longer a clear need for social distancing measures to be in place?
8. If yes, please specify which ones. For each, please provide me with any relevant recorded information (such as minutes or papers) that contains discussions on this topic.”

The University of Leeds holds some information relevant to your request. However, we consider that to respond to your request 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.

We have outlined the reasons for invoking Section 12(1) below.

We consider that to respond to questions five, six and seven and eight will take far in excess of the 18 hour appropriate limit. It is possible that any number of teams, departments, Schools, Faculties or committees have discussed remote teaching either during minuted meetings, or via email. There are no specific means by which we can identify and locate information which falls within the scope of your request. Typically, we would rely on key word searches to identify communications and meeting minutes which relate to a particular subject. However, key word searches for “remote learning” will inevitably capture a large volume of information which relates to current arrangements, rather than the discussion of any future plans, and other irrelevant material. Extensive manual reviews would therefore be required in order to isolate information which is relevant to your request. Due to the breadth of your request, it is not possible for us to estimate how long this would take. However, we can advise that there are 33 Schools, organised into seven Faculties at the University of Leeds. In order to provide a response within the 18 hour limit, each School and Faculty would need to locate any and all relevant information (while also discounting ‘false positive’ results) in less that half an hour (40 teams each taking 27 minutes gives a total of 1080 minutes or 18 hours). Given the size of each School and Faculty, this is unlikely to be sufficient. Further time would also be required for searches to be conducted at the University level, e.g. within various committees and to/from members of senior leadership. We are therefore confident that section 12(1) applies in this case.

We hope that the following information is helpful to you, should you wish to submit a refined version of your request:

- It is unlikely that section 12(1) would apply to your request if questions five, six, seven and eight were removed.
- If these questions are essential to you, we suggest that you limit your request to a particular School or Faculty (a list of which is available on our website), or a limited number of committees.
- We note that you have not specified a timeframe for questions five, six, seven or eight. We therefore recommend that any subsequent requests for this information is limited to a particular timeframe. The smaller the timeframe is, the less likely it is that a further section 12(1) refusal would be required.

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:
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.

Yours sincerely

Chloe Wilkins
Freedom of Information Officer

Secretariat
University of Leeds