Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/21/231)

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 12 May 2021, reference K/21/231. Please accept our sincere apologies for the delay in responding to your request.

Your request read:

1.) The number of disciplinary actions and fines issued against students for drug-related issues over the last five years.
2.) How much the University has spent on drug safety education in the past year.
3.) The average fine issued for a drug-related issue.”

The University of Leeds holds some of this information. However, we are refusing your requests under section 14(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 14(1) sets out that public authorities such as the University of Leeds do not have to comply with FOI requests where the request, or its impact on a public authority, cannot be justified. We have set out below an outline of the information we do and do not hold, and where the burden associated with your request sits.

The University of Leeds disciplinary process involves multiple teams, all with their own processes, procedures and records. First offences for possession of class B and C substances are managed by the University Security team. Typically, a written warning would be issued to the student in cases of this nature. These incidents are recorded by the Security team. Second offences for possession of class B and C substances are managed by our Residences Disciplinary Committee. In these cases, a fine is typically issued. Again, the Residences Disciplinary Committee keep a record of the outcome of each case. Further offences for class B or C substances, offences involving class A substances, or instances of supplying or intending to supply would be managed by the Student Cases Team under the General University Disciplinary Regulations (GUDR). These records reside with the Student Cases Team.

None of these teams record information in a way which provides an overall picture in the way you have requested. There is no organisational need for us to collate information in this manner; incidents are dealt with on their individual merits, and while we are able to identify repeat offenders, there is no requirement for us to track all incidents across all processes.

We consider that information in relation to ‘drugs-related education’ could be held by a number of teams, further adding to the total amount of time required by your
request. You may wish to liaise with Leeds University Union regarding this part of your enquiry.

Therefore, to provide the information you have requested, the Security, Residence and Student Cases teams would all need to review all disciplinary records they hold over the last five years. Our reporting systems across the entire University have developed substantially over the last few years; information in relation to more recent years is likely to be reasonably readily accessible, while information from five years ago is likely to be held in a paper archive, or in some cases, electronically archived.

We estimate that it would take each team a minimum of 7.5 hours, or one full working day to collate this information. We also note that your request actually seeks information in relation to ‘drugs-related issues’, rather than specifically the possession or supply of drugs. We therefore consider that we would need to review other records in order to locate other ‘drug-related’ incidents such as anti-social behaviour and issues with attendance. Some of this information may be held at School level, which further increases the burden of your request. It is extremely likely that your request will therefore take in excess of 22.5 hours to complete.

All parts of the University, including our Security, Residences and Student Cases teams, continue to predominantly work remotely, and in the face of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic which continues to present challenges. It is essential that we protect our ability to carry out our normal business activities, such as carrying out disciplinary processes, preparing for the upcoming academic year, and supporting students in light of the coronavirus pandemic. Although we appreciate that there is a general interest in how the University of Leeds responds to drug-related incidents on campus, we do not consider there to be sufficient public interest in the information you have request to justify the burden it would place on the University.

If you were to limit your request to formal disciplinary matters processed under the GUDR, over a shorter timeframe, it is more likely that we would be able to provide some information.

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.

Yours sincerely

**Chloe Wilkins**
Freedom of Information Officer

Secretariat
University of Leeds