



HM TREASURY

1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

4 June 2010

Information Rights Unit

Tel: 0207 270 4558

Fax: 0207 270 4861

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

FOI.responses@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk

Martin Rosenbaum
Executive Producer, Radio
BBC Political Programmes
6th floor, 4 Millbank,
London SW1P 3JQ

By email: martin.rosenbaum@bbc.co.uk

Ref: 10/384

Re: Freedom of Information Act 2000: COINS Public Spending data

Thank you for your enquiry dated 12 May requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In substance this replicates a previous request of yours that was refused and about which you have complained to the Information Commissioner.

2. Your request was for the contents of the COINS database.
3. You will have seen the Prime Minister's announcement this week that the government is to publish historic COINS data this month¹. As a start, we have this morning released COINS data for 2009-10 and 2008-09.
4. The information is hosted at www.data.gov.uk. Commentary is also provided with a view to assisting potential users of the data. We hope this will go some way to address the difficulties that influenced the previous decision to withhold all the information under the exemption at section 36(2)(c) of the Act. You should of course have regard to the terms and conditions for re-use of the data; these are set out on the website.
5. Previous years' data going back to 2005-06 will be added to the disclosure by 15th June. We are proceeding with all due haste to resolve the associated practical issues. Technically, under the Act, all information due to be published will now be exempt under section 22 of the Act – 'information intended for future publication' - and in this case there is no option available to disclose earlier than it is published.
6. In-year and future years data are not currently included for publication. As set out in our response to your previous request, this is information that is covered by the policy formulation exemption at section 35(1)(a) of the Act, as well as section 43 for commercially sensitive information relating e.g. to trading funds, and security 23(1) and defence services 26(1)(b)). The public interest considerations remain as before, as does our conclusion that the exemptions ought to be maintained in this connection. Published datasets will however, be updated regularly and will include data as it becomes available for completed periods. COINS data for 2010-11 will be published in June 2011 once the full year is completed.
7. Some data for 2009-10 and prior years has been withheld because of national security (s.23(1)) or defence (s.26(1)(b)). For the present, information relating to Whole of Government accounts is

¹ <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/statements/transparency/pm-letter.aspx>



also being protected as relating to policy formulation (s.35(1)(a)). However, we expect that this will be published once the Whole of Government Accounts for 2009-10 have been completed.

8. Our detailed arguments in relation to the information we are withholding are as set out in our response to you at internal review stage in relation to your prior request – copy attached for ease.

9. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Information Commissioner's Office because of the consideration they are currently giving to our handling of your prior request.

10. If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. It will be helpful to us if you remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.



Paul Morran
Information Rights Unit

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

If you are not happy with this reply, you may request a review by writing to HM Treasury, Information Rights Unit, 2/S2, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ.

Email FOI.responses@hmtreasury.gsi.gov.uk

Any review request must be made within 2 months of the date of this letter.

It would assist our review if you set out which aspects of the reply concern you and why you are dissatisfied.

If you are not content with the outcome your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Treasury. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

