

Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham B5 4UA
21 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3HF

By email

12 June 2018

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - Request For Information.

Refusal Notice- Section 12

Reference: FOI 20180553

Dear 

Thank you for your email in which you request:

I would like to receive a copy of all email correspondence in the last two years between addresses registered to the Ofwat email domain (ofwat.gsi.gov.uk) and addresses registered to one of the eleven domains listed below, that contain the words “debt,” “debts,” “leverage,” “gearing,” “nationalisation,” “nationalise,” “concern,” “concerns,” “difficulty” or “difficulties”.

The eleven email domains are:

anglianwater.co.uk
avg.co.uk
castlewater.co.uk
nwl.co.uk
severntrent.co.uk
southernwater.co.uk
pennon-group.co.uk
thameswater.co.uk
uuplc.co.uk
wessexwater.co.uk
yorkshirewater.co.uk

Notes on my request:

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- By 'correspondence,' I mean that I would like a copy of every email that contains one or more of these words, as well as any other emails in that particular thread (i.e. all replies or antecedents to that email).
- By 'last two' years, I mean emails that were sent on or after 17th May 2016.
- I would like the sender and recipient(s) of every email to be clear (if doing this violates data privacy laws, then I would appreciate the domain names of the sender/recipient).
- If the emails I have asked for contain information which you are not legally allowed to publish, then please redact the records as necessary.

I can confirm that Ofwat does hold information that falls within the description specified in your request, however from our preliminary assessment, it is clear that we will not be able to answer your request without further clarification.

Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit which for Ofwat is £600. Further details are provided in our fee statement which can be viewed here <http://www.ofwat.gov.uk/foi/>

In order to provide you with the information on the scale you have requested Ofwat can confirm that this would produce 5706 emails received by Ofwat and 10742 emails sent by Ofwat and result in over 16 gigabytes of data. The total cost of complying with this request would be approximately £20,560.00 (please see the section 12 assessment cost attached).

It will take us in excess of the applicable time limit to determine the appropriate material and locate, retrieve and extract the information in reference to your request. Therefore, your request will not be processed further.

The high value return of emails in this search is likely to be due to the nature of some of your search terms including "concerns" and "difficulties" as these words often form part of email disclaimers which could not be excluded from the search. The initial search for data for this request has taken 3 days to produce. If you wish to refine your request by narrowing its scope and being more specific about the information you particularly wish to obtain, Ofwat will consider this new request for information.

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Once a FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, Ofwat may publish the response and any material released on our website in the [FOI disclosure section](#). Any personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing. This document will be held in accordance with Ofwat's retention and disposal schedule which can be found in our Publication Scheme at the following link <https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/publication/retention-disposals-policy/>. If you have any concerns how Ofwat processes your personal data please contact the Data Protection Officer at FOI@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk. To view Ofwat's full privacy policy please go to <https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/publication/privacy-policy/>

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 the decision, please contact:

Programme and Project Management Office
Ofwat
Centre City Tower
7 Hill Street
Birmingham B5 4UA
mailbox@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk

If you are not happy with the outcome of that review you can ask the Information Commissioner's Office ('ICO') to consider your complaint. Generally, the ICO will not make a decision unless you have exhausted Ofwat's complaints procedure. The ICO can be contacted at:

<https://ico.org.uk/>

or

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

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Yours sincerely,

Christine Manise
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Programme and Project Management
Ofwat
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7 Hill Street
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