

## Freedom of Information (FOI) Act & Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) Disclosure Log 2024/25 (Quarters 1 to 3 - April 2024 - December 2024)

Information released: 25 February 2025

Date of Request / Information Requested	Date of Response / Response
<p><i>Reference: AFBIFOI20240302</i></p> <p><i>Date of Request: 21/03/24</i></p> <p><i>The following information was requested:</i></p> <p><i>Number of staff employed by Afbi,</i>  <i>Total running costs of facility</i>  <i>Total income achieved,</i>  <i>Total acres farmed/ rented.</i>  <i>Total and types of animals on farm.</i>  <i>Confirm if you have bid or purchased any additional land.</i>  <i>Is Afbi controlled or financed by daera .</i></p>	<p>Date of Response: 19/04/24</p> <p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>The vast majority of activity at AFBI Hillsborough aligns with AFBI’s Livestock Production Sciences Branch (LPSB). As such the data provided below aligns with the data associated with LPSB. A small team of five individuals aligned with renewable energy represent the remaining activity at AFBI Hillsborough but the data for this team is not included below as it is intertwined with data from its parent branch (Agri-Environmental technologies).</p> <p><b>Number of staff employed by AFBI [at Hillsborough].</b>  While staff numbers fluctuate, as at 18 April 2024, the total number of staff employed within LPSB and based at AFBI Hillsborough is 98 (this includes permanent staff, fixed term staff and agency staff conducting special projects or backfilling vacancies). There are an additional five staff based at AFBI Hillsborough aligned with the AFBI’s Agri-Environment Branch. There are also five LPSB staff based at AFBI Loughgall. Please note this data reflects the number of staff and not the full-time equivalents.</p> <p><b>Total running costs of the Hillsborough facility.</b>  Based on the latest available audited Accounts for the financial year 2022/23, the total expenditure for LPSB was £4,340,808. This expenditure aligns with both farm and research activities.</p> <p><b>Total income achieved [from activities at Hillsborough].</b>  Based on the latest available audited Accounts for the financial year 2022/23, the total income for LPSB was £3,003,218. This expenditure aligns with both farm and research activities.</p> <p><b>Total acres farmed/rented at Hillsborough.</b></p>

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- As of 1 April 2024, the total acres farmed at Hillsborough is 666.73 acres.
- As of 1 April 2024, the total rented acres farmed at Hillsborough is 217.56 acres.

**Total and types of animals on Hillsborough farm.**

Animal numbers fluctuate daily but as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, the total number of animals on the Hillsborough Farm were 2883. (NB additional animals are located on the AFBI Loughgall site).

Animal total by type is featured in the table below:

Total Youngstock	285
Total Pigs	1133
Total Bovine	804
Total Sheep	661

Reference: AFBIFOI20240402

Date of Response: 09/05/2024

*Date of Request: 12/04/2024*

The following response was provided:

*The following information was requested:*

I am writing to advise that the Institute has completed its search and can confirm that we hold the information you seek. The [advice document is attached as an annex to this letter.](#)

You should note that as the requested information is exempt under Section 39(1) of the Freedom of Information Act as environmental information, I have handled your request under the terms of the

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	Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). Third party personal data contained within the annexed document has been withheld in accordance with Regulations 12(3) and 13(1) of the EIR.										
<p><i>Reference: AFBIFOI20240404</i></p> <p><i>Date of Request: 19/04/2024</i></p> <p><i>The following information was requested:</i></p> <p><i>Spend on Office supplies and associated products for the below financial years.</i>  <i>1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023</i>  <i>1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024</i></p> <p><i>Start date &amp; duration of Contract?</i></p> <p><i>Is there an extension clause in the contract and, if so, the duration of the extension?</i></p> <p><i>Has a decision been made yet on whether the contract is to be either extended or renewed?</i></p> <p><i>Who is the senior officer (outside of procurement) responsible for the contract?</i></p> <p><i>Name of Incumbent Supplier?</i></p> <p><i>How long have you traded with them?</i></p> <p><i>If you publish your register of contracts and purchasing, can you please provide a website link.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, can you confirm if you have a contract in place for Tail End Spend.</i></p>	<p>Date of Response: 09/05/2024</p> <p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>AFBI is a participating user of a <a href="#">collaborative contract let by Crown Commercial Service</a><sup>1</sup>. Crown Commercial Service awarded this single supplier framework (RM6059 Lot 1) for the supply of office desktop consumables including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• general office stationery</li> <li>• catering goods (such as tea and coffee)</li> <li>• janitorial goods (such as refuse sacks, washroom supplies)</li> <li>• small office machines (such as paper shredding machines, laminators)</li> </ul> <p>A separate contract is in place for the supply of copier paper.</p> <p>Answers to your list of supplementary queries are set out in the table below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="884 991 2078 1318"> <thead> <tr> <th>Query</th> <th>Response</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Spend on Office supplies and associated products for the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24.</td> <td>2022/23 – £35,036.25 2023/24 – £51,925.96</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Start date &amp; duration of Contract?</td> <td>01 April 2021 for four years</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Is there an extension clause in the contract and, if so, the duration of the extension?</td> <td>No extension clause</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Has a decision been made yet on whether the contract is to be either extended or renewed?</td> <td>Not applicable</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Query	Response	Spend on Office supplies and associated products for the financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24.	2022/23 – £35,036.25 2023/24 – £51,925.96	Start date & duration of Contract?	01 April 2021 for four years	Is there an extension clause in the contract and, if so, the duration of the extension?	No extension clause	Has a decision been made yet on whether the contract is to be either extended or renewed?	Not applicable
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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/dof-collaborative-arrangement-provision-office-supplies>

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	Who is the senior officer (outside of procurement) responsible for the contract?	We do not hold this information, as this is not an AFBI Contract.
	Name of Incumbent Supplier?	Banner Group Ltd
	How long have you traded with them?	Since AFBI's inception in 2006 (under the current and previous collaborative contracts)
	If you publish your register of contracts and purchasing, can you please provide a website link.	We do not hold this information, as this is not an AFBI Contract.
	In addition, can you confirm if you have a contract in place for Tail End Spend.	We do not hold this information, as this is not an AFBI Contract.
<p><i>Reference: AFBIFOI20240601</i></p> <p><i>Date of Request: 13/06/2024</i></p> <p><i>The following information was requested:</i></p> <p><i>Please supply the following information for your Agency ONLY, (do not including any data on other agencies or public bodies that may report to you) for the period of 2023:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Year of Creation/Launch/Establishment?</i></li> <li><i>2. Your Annual Budget?</i></li> <li><i>3. Other Revenue received but not from government?</i></li> <li><i>4. Fiscal Powers: Yes/No</i></li> <li><i>5. Regulatory Powers: Yes/No</i></li> <li><i>6. Do you sponsor other Public Bodies: Yes/No, if yes who?</i></li> <li><i>7. Number of permanent staff?</i></li> </ol>	<p><b>Date of Response: 08/07/2024</b></p> <p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>Elements of your request are exempt from disclosure under section 21 of the above legislation, as they are accessible elsewhere (namely, in various documents published on the AFBI website). However, for your convenience I have extracted the relevant figures and included links to their sources where appropriate.</p> <p>AFBI is an arm's-length body of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs NI, and as such does not have fiscal or regulatory powers and does not sponsor other bodies.</p> <p>Staffing figures in the table below are for the year ending March 2023.</p>	

Date of Request / Information Requested	Date of Response / Response		
8. Number of temporary staff (including part timers)?	<b>Query</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Source &amp; notes</b>
9. Number of contractors employed?	Year of Creation/ Launch/Establishment?	AFBI was established by the Agriculture (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 and began operation in 2006.	See <a href="#">The Agriculture (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 (legislation.gov.uk)</a>
	Your Annual Budget?	£73,020,000	Opening allocation for 2023/24. See p 29, <a href="#">AFBI Business Plan 2023 - 2024   Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (afbini.gov.uk)</a>
	Other Revenue received but not from government?	£24,438,000	See p 91, <a href="#">AFBI Annual Report and Accounts 2022 - 2023   Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (afbini.gov.uk)</a>
	Fiscal Powers: Yes/No	No	N/A
	Regulatory Powers: Yes/No	No	N/A
	Do you sponsor other Public Bodies: Yes/No, if yes who?	No	N/A
	Number of permanent and fixed term employees (including both full and part time staff)	662	
	Number of temporary and contract staff (contractors and agency temps)	61	
	Number of secondments (non pay-roll staff on secondment from other organisations)	1	

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<p><i>Reference: AFBIFOI20240604</i></p> <p><i>Date of Request: 27/06/2024</i></p> <p><i>The following information was requested:</i></p> <p><i>Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 please provide me with information on the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The details of the WFH/hybrid working policy for the AFBI organisation as a whole</i></li> <li><i>How this is being implemented across all branches and departments</i></li> <li><i>How this is being enforced/agreed upon from management down to individual employees</i></li> <li><i>How many employees, per branch and grade, have a WFH arrangement and how many days they are allowed to work from home/are mandated to be on site</i></li> <li><i>Are there exceptions where WFH is not allowed and if so what is the documented policy on this?</i></li> <li><i>What are the exceptions to the WFH policy and what are the arrangements around disability?</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Date of Response:</b></p> <p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>Thank you for your email of 16 June 2024 where you requested information about working from home in AFBI.</p> <p>I am writing to advise that the institute has completed its search and can confirm that we hold most of the information you request.</p> <p>Details are set out in the table below and in the <a href="#">two annexes</a> to this letter.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="882 699 1482 738">Question</th> <th data-bbox="1482 699 2094 738">AFBI response</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="882 738 1482 847">The details of the WFH/hybrid working policy for the AFBI organisation as a whole</td> <td data-bbox="1482 738 2094 847">The working from home/hybrid working policy is set out in the policy document attached as <a href="#">Annex 1</a> to this letter.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="882 847 1482 957">How this is being implemented across all branches and departments</td> <td data-bbox="1482 847 2094 957">Implementation of the hybrid working policy is supported by the toolkit document attached as <a href="#">Annex 2</a> to this letter.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="882 957 1482 1066">How this is being enforced/agreed upon from management down to individual employees</td> <td data-bbox="1482 957 2094 1066">The process for agreeing hybrid working arrangements is set out in the toolkit document attached as <a href="#">Annex 2</a> to this letter.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="882 1066 1482 1353">How many employees, per branch and grade, have a WFH arrangement and how many days they are allowed to work from home/are mandated to be on site</td> <td data-bbox="1482 1066 2094 1353"> <p>AFBI does not hold this information centrally.</p> <p>In line with the hybrid working policy and toolkit, arrangements for hybrid working are agreed between individual staff members, their line managers, and the relevant heads of branch.</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Question	AFBI response	The details of the WFH/hybrid working policy for the AFBI organisation as a whole	The working from home/hybrid working policy is set out in the policy document attached as <a href="#">Annex 1</a> to this letter.	How this is being implemented across all branches and departments	Implementation of the hybrid working policy is supported by the toolkit document attached as <a href="#">Annex 2</a> to this letter.	How this is being enforced/agreed upon from management down to individual employees	The process for agreeing hybrid working arrangements is set out in the toolkit document attached as <a href="#">Annex 2</a> to this letter.	How many employees, per branch and grade, have a WFH arrangement and how many days they are allowed to work from home/are mandated to be on site	<p>AFBI does not hold this information centrally.</p> <p>In line with the hybrid working policy and toolkit, arrangements for hybrid working are agreed between individual staff members, their line managers, and the relevant heads of branch.</p>
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		<p>AFBI is currently organised into 37 branches and larger business areas, each composed of a number of smaller teams. Assuming the location, retrieval and extraction of the information requested would take at least one hour of staff time per business area (at the nominal £25 per hour prescribed in legislation), the time taken to respond to this element of the request would exceed the appropriate limit established under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (that is, £450).</p> <p>AFBI is therefore not obliged to comply with this element of the request.</p>
	<p>Are there exceptions where WFH is not allowed and if so what is the documented policy on this?</p>	<p>See section 3.3 of the hybrid working policy attached as <a href="#">Annex 1</a> to this letter, where it is noted that 'Not all business areas and roles will be suitable for hybrid working. The nature of the work may dictate that not all laboratory, field or office based roles will be suitable for hybrid working.'</p>
	<p>What are the exceptions to the WFH policy and what are the arrangements around disability?</p>	<p>See previous response.</p> <p>See also section 3.5 of the hybrid working policy which states 'There are a significant number of roles across [AFBI] which are not suitable for home working, such as laboratory or field roles.'</p>

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	<p>The hybrid working toolkit attached as <a href="#">Annex 2</a> also states: 'Home working may not be suitable for individuals who have not achieved satisfactory performance markings in their most recent performance review, are on a performance improvement plan and for example require a period of close supervision. Likewise new staff members, are expected to be available to work on-site as required, as a minimum, for the first 4-6 weeks of employment for induction purposes.'</p> <p>There are no specific exemptions related to disability. (See section 2.1 of the policy which states 'This policy applies to all employees regardless of age, marriage (including equal/same sex marriage) and civil partnership, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, or gender identity or gender expression.'</p>
<p><i>Reference: AFBIEIR20240701</i></p> <p><i>Date of Request: 09/07/2024*</i></p> <p><i>The following information was requested:</i></p> <p><i>In your recent webinar "Lough Neagh: Past, Present and Future" reference was made to water quality monitoring at the location of an ABFI buoy in Lough</i></p>	<p>Date of Response: 06/09/2024</p> <p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>Thank you for your email of 9 July 2024 and subsequent correspondence where you requested information from AFBI relating to Lough Neagh water quality data.</p>



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<p><i>Neagh. Please provide me with a time history of observations from that location. I am particularly, but not exclusively, interested in the recorded concentration of Total Phosphorus.</i></p> <p><i>*Request originally made in informal correspondence, formalised as EIR request on this date and subsequently clarified.</i></p>	<p>I apologize once again for the delay in formally responding to your request. A spreadsheet with the raw total phosphorus data is attached as <a href="#">Annex A</a> to this letter. (My colleagues have previously supplied the annually averaged data.)</p> <p>You raised several other questions in communications with colleagues. These are answered below.</p> <p><b>1. Records of the occurrences of bloom events</b></p> <p>Regulation 12(4)(a) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the exception for information not held) applies here. AFBI does not hold records of occurrences of bloom events. Recent bloom events may be recorded by the public using the <a href="#">Bloomin' Algae</a><sup>2</sup> app or direct reporting to the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). <a href="#">Details of how to request information from the department are available on the DAERA website</a><sup>3</sup>.</p> <p>Bloom events are hard to define, and in the most recent cases are instances of surface accumulations of Microcystis (not recorded by AFBI), but our response to question 2 below is relevant.</p> <p><b>2. Long-term data on the variation of specific bacterial populations within the lough's water column</b></p> <p>AFBI does not monitor bacterial populations. We are currently working on bringing historical phytoplankton data (which should contain cyanobacteria data) together – this is work in progress, and as such regulation 12(4)(d) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the exception for material in the course of completion) applies here. (An outline of the public interest test is attached as <a href="#">Annex B</a> to this letter.)</p>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/bloomin-algae>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/access-information-0>

Date of Request / Information Requested	Date of Response / Response
	<p>However, relevant information can be found in the published scientific literature. A search using keywords such as 'Neagh', 'plankton', and 'cyanobacteria' with authors such as 'McElarney', 'Foy', 'Gibson', and 'Rippey' should provide a useful starting point.</p> <p><b>3. A register of the reported surface blooms</b></p> <p>AFBI does not maintain or hold a register of the reported surface blooms. As noted above, bloom events may be recorded by the public using the <a href="#">Bloomin' Algae</a><sup>4</sup> app or direct reporting to the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).</p> <p>Regulation 12(4)(a) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the exception for information not held) therefore applies here.</p> <p><b>4. Have you been able to make any use of remote-sensing data?</b></p> <p>To date AFBI has not been in a position to make use of remote-sensing data in this area. There is a pilot study underway led by DAERA that AFBI are supporting, but cloud cover is acknowledged as a problem.</p> <p>Information related to this element of your request is therefore covered by the exception in regulation 12(4)(a) (information not held).</p> <p><b>5. Information on the sampling procedure used by AFBI to obtain samples for TP determinations.</b></p> <p>Integrated water samples were collected at a mid-lake station in 10m water depth weekly (1974–92) or fortnightly (1993 to present). Integrated samples were obtained using a 10m long composite tube sampler. The water was transferred to a clean plastic bottle and returned to the lab for chemical analysis.</p> <p>AFBI gives no undertaking, warranty or representation regarding the released data including but not limited to its accuracy, quality or fitness for any particular purpose or analysis</p>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/bloomin-algae>

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	<p>The supply of information in response to a request under the Regulations does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. Under UK copyright law you can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs.</p> <p>For other forms of re-use, for example publishing the information, you would need the permission of the organisation or person who owns the copyright. In the case of information produced by government departments and agencies you can re-use the information under the <a href="#">Open Government Licence</a><sup>5</sup>.</p> <p>If, however, the copyright is identified as belonging to somebody else, you will need to apply for permission. For information about how to obtain permission from a third party, please visit the <a href="#">Intellectual Property Office</a><sup>6</sup>.</p>
<p><i>Reference: AFBIFOI20240901</i></p> <p><i>Date of Request: 08/09/2024</i></p> <p><i>The following information was requested:</i></p> <p><i>I would be grateful if you would provide the following:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The name of the trained evaluator who performed the job evaluation.</i></li> </ol>	<p>Date of Response: 10/10/2024</p> <p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>Thank you again for your emails to AFBI People and Culture Branch of 12 September 2024 where you requested information about the job evaluation process in AFBI, and the decision-making around the restructuring of the institute’s Grassland and Plant Science Branch.</p> <p>I am writing to apologize for the delay in our response, and to advise that the relevant business areas have completed a search and can confirm that we hold some of the information you have requested.</p>

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/open-government-licence.htm>

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/copy/c-other.htm>

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<p>2. <i>The process followed by the evaluator including with whom s/he consulted internally and externally relating to the evaluation;</i></p> <p>3. <i>The relevant guidance to which you refer below; and</i></p> <p>4. <i>The type of additional information referenced below which would need to be verified by my line manager/senior management (does it need to be verified by both my line manager and senior management or just by my line manager and where is this requirement documented?) for a review request to be initiated.</i></p> <p><i>Can you please provide me with a timeframe for a response to the foregoing requests for information.</i></p> <p><i>Separately but linked to it, can you provide me with details of the process by which it was decided to:</i></p> <p>1. <i>Appoint 2 individuals to the TP Head of Branch role of the previously enlarged Branch, sharing the role together each performing it at different intervals;</i></p> <p>2. <i>The process arrived at subsequent to 2 individuals acting in a TP Head of Branch role which resulted in the decision to split the previous one GPS Branch into 2 other new scientific branches. Might this splitting of one previous branch into 2 been necessary due to the fact that 2 persons had both satisfactorily carried out the TP Head of Branch role intermittently? It would have been difficult to appoint one of them to be the permanent HoB of the one previous Branch</i></p>	<p>With respect to some other elements of your request, AFBI does not itself hold the information you have requested but can direct you to publicly available material which should answer your query.</p> <p>Our response is contained in the table below and in <a href="#">the annexes to this letter</a>.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="884 448 1299 504">Information requested</th> <th data-bbox="1299 448 2105 504">AFBI response</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="884 504 1299 1348"> <p>The name of the trained evaluator who performed the job evaluation.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1299 504 2105 1348"> <p>This information is exempt from disclosure under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as the personal information of third parties where release of that third-party personal data would contravene any of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).</p> <p>The first of the six data protection principles requires that personal data be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner. To deal with fairness and transparency first, it is unlikely that the subjects of the data you request would expect it to be shared with you or consider it fair that you should have access to it.</p> <p>In terms of lawfulness, Article 6 of the GDPR identifies several lawful bases for processing personal data. Of these, only two – ‘consent’ under Article 6(1)(a) or ‘legitimate interest’ under Article 6(1)(f) – could be considered applicable in this case.</p> <p>The subjects of the requested data have not given consent for the data to be shared with you, and in any case such consent is unlikely to be valid where there is an imbalance between the data subject and the data controller (in this case a public</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Information requested	AFBI response	<p>The name of the trained evaluator who performed the job evaluation.</p>	<p>This information is exempt from disclosure under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as the personal information of third parties where release of that third-party personal data would contravene any of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).</p> <p>The first of the six data protection principles requires that personal data be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner. To deal with fairness and transparency first, it is unlikely that the subjects of the data you request would expect it to be shared with you or consider it fair that you should have access to it.</p> <p>In terms of lawfulness, Article 6 of the GDPR identifies several lawful bases for processing personal data. Of these, only two – ‘consent’ under Article 6(1)(a) or ‘legitimate interest’ under Article 6(1)(f) – could be considered applicable in this case.</p> <p>The subjects of the requested data have not given consent for the data to be shared with you, and in any case such consent is unlikely to be valid where there is an imbalance between the data subject and the data controller (in this case a public</p>
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<p><i>without the other not appointed to the permanent role not having a valid claim for unfair discrimination. Again, it would be helpful if you could please provide me with the timescale for providing this information.</i></p> <p><i>Supplementary queries added on 12/09/2024</i></p> <p><i>Notwithstanding my earlier request for information, can you please provide the following:</i></p>		<p>authority, AFBI, which is also the employer of the data subjects.)</p> <p>And while you have a legitimate interest in understanding the background to the job evaluation exercise to which your request refers, I consider that the rights of the individuals whose data you have requested to have their personal data processed lawfully, fairly and transparently outweigh that interest.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>The policy referred to in the e-mail below of 5th September,2024;</i></li> <li>2. <i>The process which was followed to evaluate the grade of my role;</i></li> <li>3. <i>The relevant guidance which was followed; and</i></li> <li>4. <i>The information held on my personnel file relating to my application to have my role evaluated.</i></li> </ol>	<p>The process followed by the evaluator including with whom s/he consulted internally and externally relating to the evaluation.</p>	<p>AFBI does not hold this information in its records. The job evaluation process used in AFBI follows the Northern Ireland Civil Service procedures as set out in the document Job Evaluation in the NICS attached to this letter as <a href="#">Annex A</a>.</p> <p>You may also find it helpful to review the job evaluation and grading support (JEGS) <a href="#">Good Practice Guide</a>, published by the UK Cabinet Office.</p> <p>The job evaluation was based on the contents of the job evaluation form completed by the post holder. No further consultation was undertaken.</p>
	<p>The relevant guidance to which you refer below.</p>	<p>See <a href="#">Annex A</a> to this letter and the JEGS <a href="#">Good Practice Guide</a>.</p>
	<p>The type of additional information referenced below which would need to be verified by my line manager/senior management (<i>does it need to</i></p>	<p>Job Evaluation in the NICS documents the requirements for a review of a job evaluation outcome.</p> <p>The reference to ‘additional information’ refers to additional information to inform a review of the grading decision – in</p>

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	<p><i>be verified by both my line manager and senior management or just by my line manager and where is this requirement documented?) for a review request to be initiated.</i></p>	<p>other words, information that was not provided by the role holder at the time of the original evaluation.</p> <p>As explained in Job Evaluation in the NICS, 'Any additional information provided by the appellant about the job must be verified by the role-holder's line manager <i>or</i> senior management.' [Emphasis added.]</p>
	<p>... can you provide me with details of the process by which it was decided to:</p> <p>Appoint 2 individuals [...] to the TP Head of Branch role of the previously enlarged Branch, sharing the role together each performing it at different intervals</p>	<p>The process consisted of internal deliberations by AFBI senior management as documented in the paper attached as <a href="#">Annex B, the minutes of the AFBI Executive Management Team meetings on 5 September 2023 (Annex C) and 21 November 2023 (Annex D) and the emails attached as Annexes E, F and G.</a></p> <p>Material that does not fall within the scope of the request has been redacted from <a href="#">annexes B, C and D.</a></p> <p>Some material that falls within the scope of your request but which engages the exemption in Section 43(2) of the Act (commercial interests) has also been redacted from <a href="#">Annex B.</a></p>
	<p>The process arrived at subsequent to 2 individuals acting in a TP Head of Branch role which resulted in the decision to split the previous one GPS Branch into 2 other new scientific branches. Might this splitting of one previous branch into 2 been necessary due to the fact that 2 persons</p>	<p>As above.</p> <p>Elements of this query represent a request for confirmation of the requester's opinion, rather than a request for recorded information, and as such falls outside the scope of the FOIA.</p>

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	<p>had both satisfactorily carried out the TP Head of Branch role intermittently? It would have been difficult to appoint one of them to be the permanent HoB of the one previous Branch without the other not appointed to the permanent role not having a valid claim for unfair discrimination.</p>	
	<p>The policy to which [the head of AFBI People and Culture Branch] refers in her e-mail below of 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024.</p>	<p>See <a href="#">Annex A</a> to this letter and the JEGS <a href="#">Good Practice Guide</a>.</p>
	<p>The process which was followed to evaluate the grade of my role</p>	<p>See <a href="#">Annex A</a> to this letter and the JEGS <a href="#">Good Practice Guide</a>.</p>
	<p>The relevant guidance which was followed</p>	<p>See <a href="#">Annex A</a> to this letter and the JEGS <a href="#">Good Practice Guide</a>.</p>
	<p>The information held on my personnel file relating to my application to have my role evaluated.</p>	<p>AFBI does not hold records relating to the information you request.</p> <p>AFBI employees do not have a personnel file as such: transactional HR records are maintained by HR Connect, with some material relating to particular events or processes held by AFBI people and Culture Branch.</p>

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<p><i>Reference: AFBIFOI20241001</i></p> <p><i>Date of Request: 11/10/2024</i></p> <p><i>The following information was requested:</i></p> <p><i>Dear Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (Northern Ireland),</i></p> <p><i>The information that we require is as follows:-</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1) Do you use a social media management platform?</i></li> <li><i>2) If so, what tools do you use?</i></li> <li><i>3) What is your annual spend on a Social media management tool?</i></li> <li><i>4) What dates does your contract with your current supplier end ( month &amp; year) ?</i></li> <li><i>5)Do you use a social listening / media monitoring platform?</i></li> <li><i>6) If so, what tools do you use?</i></li> <li><i>7) What is your annual spend on a social listening / media monitoring tool?</i></li> <li><i>8) What dates does your contract with your current supplier end ( month &amp; year)</i></li> <li><i>9) Who is the senior person responsible for managing these contracts?</i></li> </ol>	<p><b>Date of Response: 23/10/2024</b></p> <p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>Thank you for your email of 11 October 2024 where you requested information about AFBI’s social media management.</p> <p>I am writing to advise that the Institute has completed its search and can confirm that we hold the information. Please see answers to your questions set out in the table below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="880 663 2069 1396"> <thead> <tr> <th>Question</th> <th>AFBI Response</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Do you use a social media management platform?</td> <td>Yes.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>If so, what tools do you use?</td> <td>Hootsuite.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>What is your annual spend on a social media management tool?</td> <td>£1025.28.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>What dates does your contract with your current supplier end (month &amp; year)?</td> <td>March 2025.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Do you use a social listening / media monitoring platform?</td> <td>Yes, Media Monitoring.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>If so, what tools do you use?</td> <td>NIMMS and Vuelio.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>What is your annual spend on a social listening / media monitoring tool?</td> <td>The cost for NIMMS fluctuates depending on the number of print/broadcast items needing clipped – over the last 12 rolling months we have spent £4,472.64 Our other media monitoring service is provided as park of a package of media services. It is not itemised, and so we cannot extract a figure from our rolling 12-month total.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Question	AFBI Response	Do you use a social media management platform?	Yes.	If so, what tools do you use?	Hootsuite.	What is your annual spend on a social media management tool?	£1025.28.	What dates does your contract with your current supplier end (month & year)?	March 2025.	Do you use a social listening / media monitoring platform?	Yes, Media Monitoring.	If so, what tools do you use?	NIMMS and Vuelio.	What is your annual spend on a social listening / media monitoring tool?	The cost for NIMMS fluctuates depending on the number of print/broadcast items needing clipped – over the last 12 rolling months we have spent £4,472.64 Our other media monitoring service is provided as park of a package of media services. It is not itemised, and so we cannot extract a figure from our rolling 12-month total.
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	<p>Who is the senior person responsible for managing these contracts?</p>	<p>The head of AFBI Corporate Communications Branch, Richard McCormick (info@afbini.gov.uk)</p>
<p><i>Reference: AFBIEIR20241001</i></p> <p><i>Date of Request: 04/10/2024</i></p> <p><i>The following information was requested:</i></p> <p><i>[With respect to rivers entering Lough Neagh] Please provide me with the measured values of total phosphorus and the dates of sampling for the period 2019 to present.</i></p> <p><i>Please also indicate the locations of sampling.*</i></p> <p><i>*Further clarification received 07/10/2024:</i></p> <p><i>To clarify, please just send me the data for the rivers shown on the plots.</i></p> <p><i>It could help me to know how these rivers were selected from the full set which enter the lough.</i></p>	<p><b>Date of Response: 30/10/2024</b></p> <p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>Thank you for your email of 9 July 2024 and subsequent correspondence where you requested information on total phosphorus measurements for rivers entering Lough Neagh.</p> <p>Colleagues have completed a search of the relevant records and I can confirm that AFBI holds most of the information you seek – that is, ‘the measured values of total phosphorus and the dates of sampling for the period 2019 to present [and] the locations of sampling.’</p> <p>The CSV file attached as <a href="#">Annex A</a> contains values and dates of sample for the years 2019 to 2022.</p> <p>The CSV file attached as <a href="#">Annex B</a> contains values and dates of sample for 2023.</p> <p>Data for the current year has not yet been processed and is therefore subject to the exception under Regulation 12(4)(d) relating to material which is still in the course of completion, to unfinished documents or to incomplete data. A summary of the public interest factors considered when applying this exception is attached as <a href="#">Annex C</a>.</p>	

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Please see below table for the coordinates of our sample points.

Crumlin River	54.61263	-6.26945
Six Mile Water River	54.71615	-6.22643
Main River	54.74187	-6.31380
Lower Bann River	54.75528	-6.46471
Moyola River	54.75287	-6.51612
Ballinderry	54.65747	-6.56439
Blackwater River	54.49049	-6.63997
Upper Bann River	54.46671	-6.43298
Glenavy River	54.58779	-6.24024

AFBI gives no undertaking, warranty or representation regarding the released data including but not limited to its accuracy, quality or fitness for any particular purpose or analysis

The supply of information in response to a request under the Regulations does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. Under UK copyright law you can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs.

For other forms of re-use, for example publishing the information, you would need the permission of the organisation or person who owns the copyright. In the case of information produced by

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	<p>government departments and agencies you can re-use the information under the <a href="#">Open Government Licence</a><sup>7</sup>.</p> <p>If, however, the copyright is identified as belonging to somebody else, you will need to apply for permission. For information about how to obtain permission from a third party, please visit the <a href="#">Intellectual Property Office</a><sup>8</sup>.</p>
<p><i>Reference: AFBIEIR20241002</i></p> <p><i>Date of Request: 10/10/2024</i></p> <p><i>The following information was requested*:</i></p> <p><i>Under Freedom of Information may I request the following:</i></p> <p><i>1: What work has the Department carried out in the last 7 years on the Crumlin in relation to genetic sampling of trout and salmon populations.</i></p> <p><i>2: A copy of the results of any genetic sampling surveys that have been undertaken in the Crumlin River over the past 7 years.</i></p> <p><i>Under Freedom of Information may I request the following:</i></p>	<p>Date of Response: 30/10/2024</p> <p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>Thank you for your emails of 10 October 2024 where you requested information about AFBI sampling in the Crumlin River. I am writing to advise that colleagues have completed a search of relevant records and can confirm that we hold part of the requested information.</p> <p>AFBI collected trout samples for genetic analysis from the Crumlin River in 2019, 2020 and 2021. Your request also asks for 'the results any genetic sampling survey' - the samples have yet to be processed and analysed, and therefore AFBI does not hold the information you request.</p> <p>AFBI does not undertake any work in the Crumlin River in relation to eels, so we hold no information regarding this.</p>

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/open-government-licence.htm>

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.ipo.gov.uk/types/copy/c-other.htm>

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<p>1: What work has the AFBI carried out in the last 7 years on the Crumlin in relation to the movement of eels</p> <p>2: A copy of the data AFBI holds on eels with the Crumlin River</p> <p><i>*Issued as three requests with permission given to treat as one.</i></p>													
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	<p>What dates does your contract with your current supplier end (month &amp; year)?</p>	<p>The NIMMS contract is re-tendered in March 2025. The Vuelio contract ends in March 2025 and will not be renewed.</p>
<p>Reference: AFBIEIR20241003</p> <p>Date of Request: 23/10/2024</p> <p>The following information was requested:</p> <p>Dear Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (Northern Ireland),</p>	<p>Date of Response: 18/11/2024</p> <p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>Thank you for your email of 23 October 2024 where you requested information about Hillsborough Lake pollution incidents.</p> <p>I am writing to advise that the Institute has completed its search and can confirm that we hold the requested information. We have had no incidents of pollution from the AFBI Hillsborough site into Hillsborough Lake from its inlet within the last two years.</p>	

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<p><i>Can you provide me with the number of water pollution incidents in the last two years at Hillsborough Lake inlet from AFBI Hillsborough.</i></p> <p><i>Can you share the type of water pollution, date of incidents and total wildlife affected each time.</i></p>	<p>AFBI takes protection of waterways very seriously and has many measures in place to prevent accidental discharges, as well as contain them immediately should they occur. Our practices aim to enhance the overall sustainability of farming systems and reduce the risk of surface runoff of nutrients polluting waterways.</p> <p>As a few examples, we use sensor technology to monitor slurry tanks/stores, we have strict control on slurry application (following LESSE/best practice and NAP regulations), we strategically plant riparian strips of short rotation coppice willow along waterways, and we install appropriate fencing to prevent livestock access to waterways. This is in addition to daily visual checks of the waterways by AFBI farm staff, strict record keeping, and regular checks to our sensors/alarms.</p>
<p><i>Reference: AFBIFOI20241004</i></p> <p><i>Date of Request: 31/10/2024</i></p> <p><i>The following information was requested:</i></p> <p><i>I request the following please:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1, For the period February 1st 2024 to the present day, the number of isolates for salmonella infantis identified during any tests carried out on farm animals, farm locations, livestock feed, meat or other food products in Northern Ireland, including poultry products, live chickens etc</i></li> <li><i>2, Details of antibiotic resistance detected in the above isolates, including the specific drugs any resistance related to</i></li> <li><i>3, Please supply as much information as possible - and able to be released - about the positive samples, e.g. broiler chickens on-farm, supermarket chicken</i></li> </ol>	<p>Date of Response: 31/10/2024</p> <p>The following response was provided:</p> <p>Thank you for your request for information about pathogen testing carried out by AFBI (Salmonella and antibiotic resistance). I am writing to advise that the Institute has completed its search and can confirm that we hold the information.</p> <p>You requested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For the period 1 February 2024 to the present, the number of isolates for salmonella infantis identified during any tests carried out on farm animals, farm locations, livestock feed, meat or other food products in Northern Ireland, including poultry products, live chickens etc.</li> <li>2. Details of antibiotic resistance detected in the above isolates, including the specific drugs any resistance related to.</li> </ol> <p>From the period 1st February 2024 to present, thirteen Salmonella Infantis isolates were identified. These Infantis were all isolated from food products from various food production businesses around</p>

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<p><i>products, ready-to-eat food items, feed, whether imported etc</i></p> <p><i>4, Please provide a response in exactly the same format (with the 2 x spreadsheet annexes) as was provided by my earlier FOI request from February this year, FOI REF:AFBIFOI20240202</i></p>	<p>NI. The isolates showed various resistance patterns which included resistance to the following antibiotics. Ampicillin, Kanamycin, Streptomycin, Sulphonamides, Tetracycline, Trimethoprim, Furazolidone, Nalidixic Acid, Ciprofloxacin, Cefotaxime, Framycetin and Spectinomycin.</p> <p>More detail is contained in <a href="#">the table annexed to this letter</a>.</p> <p>Commercial information has been removed from the table as exempt information under Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, in that its disclosure would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute and other persons. And while there is a public interest in transparency, this is outweighed in this case by the public interest in AFBI being a trusted provider of confidential testing services, and in food processors and others not being dissuaded from providing samples for testing.</p>