

## **Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**

### **Decision notice**

**Date:** **21 August 2023**

**Public Authority:** **London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine**  
**Address:** **Keppel Street**  
**London**  
**WC1E 7HT**

#### **Decision (including any steps ordered)**

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1. The complainant requested information about student housing. By the date of this notice, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (the public authority) had not issued a substantive response to this request.
2. The Commissioner's decision is that the public authority has breached section 10(1) of FOIA in that it failed to provide a valid response to the request within the statutory time frame of 20 working days.
3. The Commissioner requires the public authority to take the following step to ensure compliance with the legislation.
  - The public authority must provide a substantive response to the request in accordance with its obligations under FOIA.
4. The public authority must take this step within 35 calendar days of the date of this decision notice. Failure to comply may result in the Commissioner making written certification of this fact to the High Court pursuant to section 54 of FOIA and may be dealt with as a contempt of court.

## Request and response

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5. On 19 May 2023, the complainant wrote to the public authority and requested information in the following terms:

“Under the freedom of information act, I request the following information:

1 . Revenues and spending on university owned/operated student housing for the academic year 2022/23 and 2021/22

2. Average price of rent per week and per year for students in 2022/23, and also cheapest and most expensive prices per week

3. Average price of rent per week and per year for students in 2023/24 , and also cheapest and most expensive prices per week

4. Number of places for students in halls this coming year

5. How much has rent increased this year?

6. How much has rent increased by over the last ten years?

7. How many applications for accommodation were received for the coming year, and of those, how many were accepted or rejected?

If there are any points that need clarify, please let me know. If exact values cannot be determined within the reasonable limits of the FOI Act, estimates are an acceptable alternative. If the financial years do not conform to the academic year, using a reasonable alternative timeframe for costings is also acceptable”

6. The complainant sent chaser emails to the public authority on 22 June 2023 and 21 July 2023. To date, a substantive response has not been issued.

## Reasons for decision

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7. Section 1(1) of FOIA states that:

“Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled –

(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and

(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him.”

8. Section 10(1) of FOIA states that a public authority must respond to a request promptly and “not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt”.

9. On 2 August 2023, the Commissioner wrote to the public authority, reminding it of its responsibilities and asking it to provide a substantive response to the complainant’s request within 10 working days.

10. Despite this intervention, the public authority has failed to respond to the complainant.

11. From the evidence provided to the Commissioner in this case, it is clear that the public authority did not deal with the request for information in accordance with FOIA. The Commissioner finds that the public authority has breached section 10(1) by failing to respond to the request within 20 working days and it is now required to respond to the request in accordance with FOIA.

## Right of appeal

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12. Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from:

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)  
GRC & GRP Tribunals,  
PO Box 9300,  
LEICESTER,  
LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0203 936 8963

Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: [grc@justice.gov.uk](mailto:grc@justice.gov.uk)

Website: [www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber](http://www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber)

13. If you wish to appeal against a decision notice, you can obtain information on how to appeal along with the relevant forms from the Information Tribunal website.
14. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

**Signed .....**

**Michael Lea**  
**Team Manager**  
**Information Commissioner's Office**  
**Wycliffe House**  
**Water Lane**  
**Wilmslow**  
**Cheshire**  
**SK9 5AF**