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Our Ref: FOI/13/07

Sent via email to:

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed our search for the information you requested in your email of 11 April 2013, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You made five separate requests for information and a response to each is given below using your numbering.

1.If there is a complaint against the below can I write to you for you to investigate it:

HM Court Service (not to do with a Judgment or order)

Legal Aid Agency

HM Revenue and Customs

HM Land Registry

Insolvency Service

Information Commissioner

Charity Commissioner

The Civil Service Commission has been charged with two main functions. The first is maintaining the requirement of recruitment into the Civil Service on merit on the basis of fair and open competition as outlined in the Commission's Recruitment Principles. The Commission is able to hear a complaint from anybody that a Department has breached these Recruitment Principles once the Department's own complaints procedure has been exhausted and the complainant remains dissatisfied.

The second function is to hear complaints from serving civil servants about breaches of the core values of the Civil Service as outlined in the Civil Service Code. The Civil Service Code outlines the core values of the Civil Service: Integrity, Honesty, Objectivity and Impartiality, and describes the standards of behaviour expected of individual civil servants against each of these four values. The Code forms part of the terms and conditions of employment of every civil servant.

Complaints about breach of the recruitment Principles or the Civil Service Code by six of the seven organisations you list can be brought to the Civil Service

Commission. However, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is not staffed by civil servants. This means recruitment to the ICO falls outside the regulatory remit of the Civil Service Commission and its staff are not subject to the Civil Service Code.

2. Do you have a code of Conduct which applies to all the above I should follow? if so please provide me with a copy.

A copy of the Civil Service Code is attached. As noted above, the Code forms part of the terms and conditions of employment of every civil servant. Individual Departments and Agencies may in addition have their own Codes of Conduct. This information is not held by the Commission and you would need to contact the individual Department / Agency concerned for further information.

3. Do you have a complaints procedure dealing with the above? If so please provide me with a copy.

Details of how to bring a complaint to the Commission about a breach of the Recruitment Principles can be found on our website at:

<http://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/civil-service-recruitment/complaints/>

Details of how a civil servant can bring a complaint about a breach of the Civil Service Code can be brought to the Commission can be found on our website at:

<http://civilservicecommission.independent.gov.uk/civil-service-code/complaints-under-the-code/>

The Civil Service Commission is not able to hear complaints about potential breaches of the Code from non civil servants. Members of the public who wish to complain about the behaviour of civil servants should do so to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

4. Do you have an Ethnicity and Diversity Policy? If so please provide me with a copy.

The Civil Service Commission Has published a Diversity Statement on its website. It states:

'The Civil Service Commission is committed to the principle of appointment on merit. We believe a diverse workforce, appointed on merit through a fair and transparent process, greatly enhances effectiveness and performance by better reflecting the aspirations, experiences and needs of the people they serve. The Civil Service Commission therefore promotes and supports efforts to get the best candidates drawn from a strong and diverse field.'

Are 2, 3 and 4 compliant with the Parliamentary Ombudsman complaints, equality and diversity and other processes?

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's Principles outline the approach they believe public bodies should adopt when delivering good administration and customer service. These are not a prescriptive set of indicators but a guide to providing good administration and complaint handling when things go wrong. Further information can be found on their website at:

<http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/improving-public-service/ombudsmansprinciples/ombudsmans-introduction-to-the-principles>

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request, or wish to request an internal review, you should write to:

Clare Salters
Chief Executive
Civil Service Commission
G08
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ

Email: clare.salters@csc.gsi.gov.uk

You should note that the Civil Service Commission will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Civil Service Commission. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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

Yours sincerely

Sean Edwards-Playne
Communications and Case Officer