

Freedom of Information request 136-17

Request

Please find attached a series of questions below which I am requesting via the Freedom of Information Act.

Timescale between March 2016 and March 2017.

1. Which department/person(s) deals with Employment References at your organisation and what is the name of the Head of Department?
2. What is the average hourly rate of the person(s) dealing with Job References? (If outsourced, how much do you pay annually for this service?)
3. How are Employment References requested for new starters? How are they chased up? (email/telephone/postal service/fax)
4. How are Employment References completed for ex-employees (email/telephone/postal service/fax)?
5. How many hours (on average) does your company (or the outsourced company) spend, each month, requesting employment references for new candidates?
6. How many hours (on average) does your company (or the outsourced company) spend, each month, chasing up employment references for new candidates?
7. How many hours (on average) does your company spend (or the outsourced company), each month, completing employment references for former employees?
8. How many leavers (on average) does your company have per month?
9. How many new starters (on average) does your company have per month?
10. How many staff does your organisation employ at the moment?

Response

1. NHS Borders HR Department handles the Employment References although whichever department owns the vacancy approves the references. The Head of HR is Mr Colin Herbert.
2. As various departments and employees handle job references we cannot provide the average hourly rate as there is no specific grade.
3. Employment references are requested by email or post and chased using the same method.
4. Employment references for ex-employees are completed by post or email.
5. On average NHS Borders HR Dept spends 8 hours requesting employment references. (this estimation is based on number of references requested [known data] multiplied by an estimated time to print, envelope and despatch).
6. Time spent chasing up reference requests that have not been returned is not recorded, therefore under Section 17 of the FOI(S)A 2002 we cannot provide this data.

7. On average NHS Borders Finance Dept (dept responsible for providing generic ex-employee references which are normally limited to period worked, absences etc) spends 1.5 hours completing references for former employees. If a specific staff member has been requested to supply an ex-employee reference this would not be known to the organisation and so no data available for that scenario.
8. On average NHS Borders have 32 leavers (including bank staff) per month.
9. On average NHS Borders have 40 new starts (including bank staff) per month.
10. We currently employ 3683 staff (including bank staff).

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **136-17** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.