

Request Reference: 04-17

Date of Response: 31/01/2017

Request

I refer to your email dated 06/01/2017 requesting the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA"):

- *How many cases of scam emails regarding student finance have been reported to the email address "phishing@slc.co.uk" in each year since 2010*
- *The total amount that has been clawed back from individuals that were not enrolled at a University in each year since 2010*
- *The total number of cases where finance was clawed back from individuals that were not enrolled at a University in each year since 2010*

We contacted you by email on 09/01/2017 to seek clarification for the second and third part of your request:

"... can you confirm your definition of "not enrolled" and whether the requested information is related or unrelated to the first question about phishing/fraud.

For customers that are no longer attending their course because of withdrawal or suspension, SLC will seek repayment of any overpaid student finance from customers directly if this cannot be recouped from future student finance entitlement."

You responded by email dated 10/01/2017 and advised:

"The second and third question are not related to the first question.

By "not enrolled" I am referring to the number of cases when an individual has received a Student Loan when they were not enrolled on a University Course. E.g. they received a loan accidentally and the SLC have had to claw the money back."

Response

I can confirm that the Student Loans Company Limited ("SLC") holds some, but not all, of the information you have requested.

However I have concluded, after consulting with the relevant departments within SLC, that the information that is held cannot be released as the cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate limit set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. The limit applying to us is £450 or 2.5 days (calculated to be 18 hours of staff time at £25 per hour).

The information is therefore exempt under section 12(1) of the FOIA and in accordance with section 17(1) of the FOIA this letter constitutes a Refusal Notice in respect of your request.

Part 1 - Phishing

The phishing@slc.co.uk email address was created in March 2011. Therefore SLC does not hold any data for this email address prior to that date.

SLC holds data for this email address from March 2011 onwards however it is not held in an easily retrievable format. To collate and retrieve the requested data would require a member of staff to manually retrieve this information from the email box. This would take in excess of 18 hours of staff time when taken with the other parts of your request.

By way of advice and assistance we can provide the total number of emails received in the phishing@slc.co.uk email box. This would, however, include other emails and not solely those received relating to scams emails regarding student finance, for example routine customer enquiries or internal emails.

If you would like this data please advise and it will be treated as a new request for information.

Part 2 & 3 – payments clawed back from individuals not enrolled at university

SLC does not hold this data prior to academic year 2014/15 in an easily retrievable format. To collate the earlier data requires retrieving data from storage and a manual search to be undertaken to locate and compile the requested information. It has been estimated this would take in excess 20 hours to collate.

By way of advice and assistance we can provide the data for academic years 2014/15 to 2016/17. If you would like this data please advise and it will be treated as a new request for information.