From: Bridgette Smith  
Sent: 04 May 2015 15:53  
To: FOI UNIT  
Subject: Freedom of Information request from the Irish Mirror

Request for Access to Records under the Freedom of Information Act, 2014

Dear Sir or Madam,

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2014, I wish to request access to the following records, which I believe to be held by your Department/organisation:

The amount claimed for for purchase of makeup, cosmetics, hair or beauty products by each current or previous Minister or Minister of State each year since the current Government took office in February 2011. Please include the year 2015 up to the most recent date for which figures are available.

The amount claimed for professional hair styling, beauty, make up or personal styling, shopping/grooming services by each current or previous Minister or Minister of State each year since the current Government took office in February 2011. Please include the year 2015 up to the most recent date for which figures are available.

The amount claimed for new clothing, shoes or accessories, dry cleaning, laundry or clothing repairs by each current or previous Minister or Minister of State each year since the current Government took office in February 2011. Please include the year 2015 up to the most recent date for which figures are available.

I look forward to your response confirming that you have received my request.
I refer to your request dated 04/05/2015 which was received by this office on 05/05/2015 which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for records held by this FOI body. Your request sought:

1) The amount claimed for purchase of makeup, cosmetics, hair or beauty products by each current or previous Minister or Minister of State each year since the current Government took office in February 2011.
2) The amount claimed for professional hair styling, beauty, make up or personal styling, shopping/grooming services by each current or previous Minister or Minister of State each year since the current Government took office in February 2011.
3) The amount claimed for new clothing, shoes or accessories, dry cleaning, laundry or clothing repairs by each current or previous Minister or Minister of State each year since the current Government took office in February 2011.

The decision maker handling your request is Mr Brian Walsh, Finance and Corporate Affairs Division, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Elm House, Earlsvale Road, Cavan and they can be contacted at 01 6782423. A final decision on your request would normally be sent to you within 4 weeks, where a week is defined as 5 working days excluding the weekend and public holidays. This means that you can expect a decision letter to issue not later than 03/06/2015.

There are some limited situations under the FOI Act which could mean that the period for a final decision may be longer than this 4 week period. If this occurs in the case of your request, you will be advised promptly in writing setting out the reason and the new decision date.

Should our final decision not reach you on time, please feel free to contact the decision maker named above to discuss any problems that may have arisen. If you have not heard from us once the allotted time has expired, you are automatically entitled to appeal for a review of the matter. This review proceeds on the legal basis that the initial request is considered to be refused once the specified time for responding to it has expired. The review is a full and new examination of the matter carried out by a more senior member of staff.

In the event that you need to request such a review, you can do so by writing to FOI Unit, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Elm House, Earlsvale Rd, Cavan, Co. Cavan or alternatively by sending an e-mail to FOLUNIT@dcenr.gov.ie. You should state that you are seeking this review because an initial decision was not sent to you within the time allowed for a response. In that event, you would normally have 4 weeks (after the initial decision should have been sent to you) in which to make the appeal. Consideration will be given to late applications in appropriate circumstances.

Please note the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources has a policy of posting a summary of all non-personal requests and decisions on the Department’s website.

Yours sincerely,

Carmel Conaty
FOI Unit
2 June 2015

Re: FOI request reference : FOI/2015/42

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014 for records held by this body.

A final decision was made on your request by me today. I may be contacted by telephone on 01 6782423 in order to answer any questions you may have, and to assist you generally in this matter.

I am sorry to inform you that we cannot locate the records and that I must therefore refuse your request. As is explained below, this decision is made under section 15(1)(a) of the Act.

Section 15(1)(a) of the Act states that an FOI request may be refused if:

‘the record concerned does not exist or cannot be found after all reasonable steps to ascertain its whereabouts have been taken.’

In an effort to locate the records that you are seeking I searched the Department’s financial management system to identify relevant payment amounts and dates. No relevant records were identified.

At this stage, I referred your request to the Private Secretaries of the Minister and Minister of State Offices who undertook searches in their respective offices and confirmed they held no relevant records. Credit card statements were also examined for the relevant period but they also contained no relevant record.

The above are the reasonable steps which we have taken to locate the records which you have sought. Unfortunately, I must inform you that we have undertaken these searches and we were unable to locate the records in question. In accordance with the requirements of section 15(1)(a), I am satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken to
identify and locate the records requested and I am unable to locate the
records concerned and must therefore refuse your request on this basis.

In the event that you are not happy with this decision you may seek a
review of this decision by writing to the Freedom of Information Unit,
Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Elm
House, Earlsvale Road, Cavan seeking an internal review of the matter
and referring to or enclosing a copy of this letter. Please note that the
application fee for an appeal is currently €30.00. Payment should be
made by electronic fund transfer (EFT) which is the Department’s
preferred method of payment.

The Department’s bank details are:

Bank: Bank of Ireland, Main Street, Cavan.

Account Name: Department of Communications, Energy and
Natural Resources, Accounts Receivable.

IBAN:

BIC:

However, payment can also be made by way of bank draft, money
postal order, or personal cheque made payable to the Department of
Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

You should submit your appeal within 4 weeks from the date of this
notification, where a day is defined as a working day excluding the
weekend and public holidays. The making of a late appeal may be
permitted in appropriate circumstances. The review will involve a
complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the
staff of this body and the decision will be communicated to you within 3
weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Walsh
Finance and Corporate Affairs Division