TEMPLATE FOR APPLYING FOI SECTION 40(2)

DOF/2025-0031

The lawfulness, fairness and transparency test

Business areas are required to carry out a "lawfulness, fairness and transparency test" when considering the disclosure of third party personal data falling within the scope of a FOI or EIR request. **In most cases**, neither of the lawful basis outlined below will apply, however the business area must complete the test as evidence as having considered.

The steps are as follows:-

1. **Consider the Personal Data falling within the scope of the request**

   ICO guidance states that, personal data only includes information relating to natural persons who:

   - can be identified or who are identifiable, directly from the information in question; or
   - who can be indirectly identified from that information in combination with other information.

   The request is for:

   I would like to make an FOI request for a breakdown of the dismissals from the NI civil service for the last five years

   6. What was the highest salary of a dismissed staff member during this period?

   Brief description:

   The data held is relation to Q6 is being withheld as this is information is considered personal, third party data.

   Release of the requested information could risk individuals being identified due to the small numbers involved. As Data Controller, The Department cannot not assume that the requester or the wider public does not hold other information which could be used in conjunction with this to identify individuals.

2. **Lawfulness**

   Do either of the two lawful basis below which allow for the disclosure of personal data apply? **No**

   ☐ **Consent:** We do not have the consent of the individual(s) to share information regarding salary. Therefore, to release the requested information would risk

identifying the individuals and would therefore contravene the data protection principles.

☐ **Legitimate interests:** Disclosure is not necessary for the Department's legitimate interests or the legitimate interests of a third party that overrides the data subject(s) rights and freedoms, particularly their right to privacy. The data subjects involved would have a reasonable expectation that this information would not be shared with the public at large.

The DoF Privacy notice states that we may process personal information for the purposes of detection and investigation of suspected or actual fraud, loss or crime, data matching under the National Fraud Initiative, staff monitoring and as required by other legislation. This request is based solely on the requester's private concerns as opposed to a pressing public interest that would necessitate transparency and disclosure of the information.

Consequently, if P&OD was to comply with the request, it would, in effect, be making an unrestricted disclosure of personal data to the general public on the strength of the requester's private interests. This could constitute a disproportionate and unwarranted level of interference with the individuals' rights and freedoms – particularly their right to privacy and family life under the Human Rights Act 1998.