ANNEX A

FOI DOF/2026-0390

Request

Please provide the following information relating to the handling of refunds where an Attachment of Earnings deduction has been taken from salary after the relevant debt has already been paid or discharged.

Please provide:

1. Any policy, procedure, guidance or process map used for refunding overpayments arising from Attachment of Earnings Orders.
2. Any policy, procedure or guidance explaining when refunds are made directly to the individual and when they are refunded to an employer, payroll provider or other source.
3. Any policy, procedure or guidance on the use of cheques or payable orders for such refunds.
4. Any service-level agreement, memorandum of understanding, written protocol or process guidance governing interactions between EJO/NICTS, HR Connect and Account NI in relation to Attachment of Earnings deductions and refunds.
5. Any policy, procedure or guidance for urgent escalation where an employee reports financial hardship due to an incorrect payroll deduction.
6. Any target timescales for processing refunds of incorrect or duplicate Attachment of Earnings deductions.
7. Any guidance on tracing, cancelling, reissuing or expediting a cheque/payable order that has not been cashed or lodged.
8. Any policy or guidance on compensation, consolatory payments, reimbursement of financial loss, or apologies where delayed administration causes hardship or distress.
9. Any internal review, audit, lessons learned document, or process improvement document from the last three years relating to delays in processing refunds of payroll deductions, Attachment of Earnings deductions, payable orders or cheques.

DoF response

I can confirm the department holds some of the information in regard to Q4. DoF does not hold any information for the other questions and would advise the requestor to contact the Enforcement of Judgments Office via foi@justice-ni.gov.uk

Q1-3 Information not held by DoF

Q4. Please find attached at **Annex C** Chapter 8.03 of the NICS HR Handbook on Statutory Deductions and at **Annex D** the HR Connect procedure on maintaining Employee Data (pages 22 to 25 refer).

Please note some personal information has been withheld because it is exempt under Section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40(2) exempts personal information disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act.

Having considered all the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test, also known as Lawful, Fairness and Transparency Test (attached at **Annex E**), the Department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third-party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requestor is nor the data subject. Making an unrestricted disclosure of personal data for private interests 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.

Q5 – 9 Information not held by DoF

ANNEX B – INTERNAL REVIEWS

An Internal Review request examines the response based on applied exemptions, search adequacy, or response timeliness.

It is not the following, which will be treated as specified:

- Questions asking for clarification on information provided: Will be treated as part of the original FOI request.
- Additional questions about the information in the response: Will be treated as a new FOI request.
- Questions about the subject not related to the original request: Will be treated as new FOI request.
- Questions regarding how a service operates or why a decision was made: Will be treated as normal business and responded to accordingly.
- Complaints or concerns raised in response to information provided: Will be treated in line with relevant complaints procedure.

To make an Internal Review request:

- **Clearly state**: That you want an internal review of a previous FOI response and provide the necessary details.
- **Follow the timeline:** Be sure to submit your request within 40 working days of receiving the original response. If the Department has not responded at all, you have 40 working days after the original 20-day response period has passed.
- **Wait for a response:** The review is typically completed within 20 working days but can take up to 40 working days in exceptional circumstances. The Department should inform you of any delays.

What the review includes

- A fresh decision based on a reconsideration of all relevant factors.
- An assessment of whether the request was handled correctly and if exemptions were applied appropriately.
- The review will be conducted by someone who was not involved in the original decision.

If you wish to request an internal review, please email foi@finance-ni.gov.uk or write to FOI/EIR Team, Department of Finance, 2nd Floor, Craigantlet Buildings, Stoney Road, Belfast, BT4 3SX.