

**Request Reference: 3202**

FOI Request dated 17/07/2024

Request –

1. *What e-signature vendor are you currently using?*
2. *How much are you paying for your current e-signature vendor?*
3. *When is your renewal date for your e-signature vendor*

The Freedom of Information Act requires that this request is dealt with in a manner that is motive and applicant blind. A disclosure under this legislation is considered a disclosure to the world and is considered to be on the basis that it is in the public interest.

**Response**

1. DocuSign

2. Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at Section 1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at Section 1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held. Where exemptions are relied upon Section 17 of FOIA requires that we provide the applicant with a notice which: a) states that fact b) specifies the exemption(s) in question and c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

This part of your request we have exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

**Section 43(2) – Commercial Interests**

Section 43 is a class-based qualified exemption and is therefore subject to a Public Interest test.

**Public interest considerations Factors favouring disclosure**

Disclosing information regarding the University costs for our e-signature vendor involved would ensure the University are being open and transparent with the public. The disclosure would encourage public debate, increase public awareness, and would also allow the public to see where the public funds for the University are being spent.

**Factors against disclosure**

Disclosing the information requested is likely to damage the relationship between the University and the service provider(s). In turn, this could prejudice the commercial interests of the service provider(s), especially

in cases where there may be a limited number of suppliers in the market. Making a disclosure could identify information which has been specifically obtained through negotiation between the University and the service provider(s), thus prejudicing the University position in future negotiations.

### **Balance test**

Despite there being an identifiable public interest in the University being open and transparent, the interests of the University may be jeopardised if information relating to commercial costs were to be disclosed. The community would also be impacted as costs to the University could be driven up by the lack of competition due to companies refusing to do business with University's that disclose commercially sensitive information. If this information were to be disclosed, this could cause harm between the University of Hull and its service provider(s). Having weighed up all the factors outlined above, on balance the argument for disclosing this information is not made out and therefore it is in the public interest to withhold this information from disclosure.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the University, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice for those aspects of your request.

3. 02/11/2026