

27 June 2023

IC-235451-N8Q4

## Request

You asked us:

*Could you please provide me with all correspondence and communications between the Information Commissioner, John Edward, and any government ministers or Secretaries of State between 3 January 2022 and the date this request was received?"*

We received your request on 30 May 2023.

We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOIA).

## Our response

I have consulted internally within the ICO and we do hold information in scope of this request. This information has however been withheld under section 14 (1) of the FOIA.

Section 14 (1) FOIA states that:

*'14.—(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the request is vexatious.'*

The ICO guidance also states that a request can be considered vexatious if it is considered a fishing expedition and the request is likely to:

- impose a burden by obliging us to sift through a substantial volume of information to isolate and extract the relevant details;
- encompass information which is only of limited value because of the wide scope of the request;
- create a burden by requiring you to spend a considerable amount of time considering any exemptions and redactions

To comply with this request the ICO would need to review 18 months of communications and consider the applicable exemptions to a wide date range of communications. It would also require us to consult the with the various government departments to seek their views on disclosure of any material.

As the guidance states, a speculative request alone is not vexatious, however in this instance the burden combined with the wide scope of the request does mean that section 14 does apply. We therefore advise that we are refusing to comply with this request under s.14(1) of the FOIA.

If the request was more specific in relation to the information that you are trying to obtain then we may be in a position to help provide you with the information that you are seeking. We must balance the finite resources of the ICO with the public interest in responding to very broad requests for recorded information.

This concludes our response.

### **Next steps**

You can ask us to review our response. Please let us know in writing if you want us to carry out a review. Please do so within 40 working days.

You can read a copy of our full review procedure [here](#).

If we perform a review but you are still dissatisfied, you can complain to the ICO as regulator of the FOIA and EIR. This complaint will be handled just like a complaint made to the ICO about any other public authority.

You can [raise a complaint through our website](#).

### **Your information**

Our [Privacy notice](#) explains what we do with the personal data you provide to us, and set out your rights. Our retention schedule can be found [here](#).

Yours sincerely

Senior Information Access Officer



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Risk and Governance Department, Corporate Strategy and  
Planning Service  
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