

Date: 10 November 2023

IC-265279-D2M1

Request

You asked us:

"I understand it is the ICO's normal practice to redact the name of the complainant from Decision Notices.

I could not find any explanation on the ICO's website.

I should be most grateful to know why and specifically what legal provisions the ICO is following by implementing this practice.

Are there any documents held by the ICO which explain and if so may I have a copy please."

We received your request on 20 October 2023. We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOIA).

Our response

Our [Privacy Notice](#) makes it clear to complainants that if we issue a Decision Notice, then we will include their name and correspondence address on the Decision Notice sent to the public authority:

"If you contact us to make a freedom of information complaint about a public authority, and we issue a decision notice, we will need you to provide us with an identifiable correspondence address or personal email address which will be included on a copy of any decision notice provided to the public authority about which you have complained."

However, you are correct that it is the ICO's practice to redact the name of the complainant from Decision Notices. Our [FOI/EIR casework service guide](#) confirms as such:

"The complainant's contact details will be redacted from the published DN. If the DN contains any other personal information the case officer will consider whether it should be redacted. For example, information that would identify private individuals is more likely to be redacted than the names of senior PA staff." (page 37)

I have made enquiries about whether we hold any recorded information concerning the rationale for excluding the complainant's name from the published Decision Notice. We do not hold any information in scope of the request.

For context, this isn't entirely unexpected given the Freedom of Information Act 2000 was enacted in 2000, with the full provisions coming into force in 2005. Any such decision to include or exclude a complainant's name on Decision Notices – or even the decision to publish Decision Notices at all – would have been made a long time ago.

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. 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



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