

11 June 2024

IC-306616-Z7J0

Request

You asked us for:

- *"A copy of any advice, guidance or similar issued to either the Department for Culture Media and Sport, or Department for Science, Innovation & Technology, in relation to the activities of the Counter Disinformation Unit/National Security Online Information Team*
- *A copy of any report or similar produced by the ICO relating to the use of personal data by these teams*
- *A copy of any outcome, summary or similar of the ICO probe into these teams"*

We received your request on 15 May.

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

Our response

We hold some information within the scope of your request. I attach a copy of our formal outcome letter to DSIT on closure of the matter, which was dealt with as an 'incident' (where we initially assess the case and determine whether a full investigation is necessary) and did not progress to a full investigation. This letter is the only information that we hold falling within the scope of your request.

Some redactions have been made which relate to the personal data of a third party which is exempt from disclosure under s.40(2) FOIA.

FOIA section 40(2)

You will see that some of the third party personal data has been redacted in our response.

Section 40(2) of the FOIA exempts information if it is personal data belonging to an individual other than the requester and it satisfies one of the conditions listed in the legislation.

We find that the condition at section 40(3A)(a) applies in this instance: that disclosure would breach one of the data protection principles. The principles are outlined in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) with the relevant principle on this occasion being the first principle as provided by Article 5(1): that personal data shall be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner.

We do not consider that disclosing this information into the public domain is necessary or justified. There is no strong legitimate interest that would override the prejudice to the rights and freedoms of the relevant data subjects. We have therefore taken the decision that disclosing this information would be unlawful, triggering the exemption at section 40(2) of the FOIA.

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](#) on our website.

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 sets out [your rights](#). Our [Retention and Disposal Policy](#) details how long we keep information.

Yours sincerely



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