



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr Ganesh Sittampalam
request-13459-449275dc@whatdotheyknow.com

19 November 2010

Dev Mr Sittampalam

Thank you for your recent e-mail.

I understand from the Information Commissioner's office that you have confirmed that your concerns relate to two specific remaining points. We appreciate your co-operation in narrowing the issues in this way.

First, we confirm that the online publication of redacted information concerning Members' allowances was carried out for the purposes of our Publication Scheme, not in response to a specific request under the Freedom of Information Act. However, that publication took full account of security and privacy interests of the data subjects. Since the publication of this information, the guidelines have been reviewed as a matter of course and more information is now published annually. I can assure you that the House deals with all specific requests in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act.

Turning to the other issue which we understand is outstanding, we confirm that we are willing to disclose to you copies of all correspondence between Mr Djanogly MP and the Department of Resources Operations Directorate (the so called "Fees Office") covered by the period of the request where not already published on our web pages, subject to relevant exemptions under the Act. We are compiling that information and this process will necessarily involve us consulting Mr Djanogly in accordance with the Data Protection Act. We shall be working to complete that consultation process by 6th December and shall provide copies of disclosable information as soon as possible.

Finally, you ask in your e-mail about desk instructions for later years than those which we have provided. Rather than treat this as a separate request under the Act, I enclose a copy of the most recent guidelines for Members concerning the two most recent publication events, which I trust is helpful for you.

If you have any questions about the above, please let me know as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

AJ

A J Walker
Director General of Resources

HOUSE OF COMMONS

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF RESOURCES ANDREW WALKER CPFA

JANET RISSEN (BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT) CHRIS RIDLEY MBA FCCA (FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT)

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

MEC ACA/PAAE Redaction Guidelines - October 2009

Guiding Principles

Information will only be removed where the House considers that there would be unlikely to be an obligation to provide it under the Freedom of Information Act. Examples are information which would, in relation to the MP or third parties:

- Endanger personal safety and security
- Impact on legitimate expectations of privacy such that it would be unlikely to be required to be published under the FOI Act
- Give rise to a risk of identity theft or other fraudulent activities

The Information Tribunal list of permitted editing will be taken fully into account in combination with the exclusions described in the amending Order which removes certain classes of information from the provisions of the FOI Act. However, while the Order excludes all information relating to the identities of suppliers to residential addresses from the scope of the Act, the redaction guideline will limit the exclusion of such data to small suppliers who have direct access to the home.

While personal addresses will be removed, a separate report will list the location of the second home (London or Constituency) and will indicate if the nomination of that home changed in the accounting period (including if the change was within either area)

NB: in individual cases it will be clear that a private address has been redacted from a claim form, invoice, etc, but it will not generally be obvious whether the redacted address was that of the main or second home.

Specific examples

Claims forms

Removed - accounting and ID codes relating to each MP, details/annotations relating to security expenditure and the MP's address and signature.

Not removed - all other information will remain including staff annotation, staff initials, details of reduced or rejected payments, names of [large] suppliers (e.g., BT and Sky)

Rental agreements

Removed - address of property, name, address contact details of landlords, account numbers

Not removed - terms of agreement, financial details, names of lease holders (even if not MP)

Mortgage information

Removed - address of property, account details/reference numbers

Not removed - name of mortgagees (even if not MP), provider name and contact details, dates, mortgage value and outstanding sums, payments, property value

Council Tax

Removed - MP address, account details

Not removed – names to whom tax is charged, breakdown of charges, banding, name of local authority

Insurance policies

Removed – policy and account numbers, barcodes, signatures

Not removed - names of policy holders (even if not the MP), details of cover and cost, company details

Invoices – large suppliers (e.g., BT, Sky, EDF)

Removed - home address of MP, barcodes, account numbers, customer reference numbers, MP telephone numbers, MP email address

Not removed – name of person invoiced (even if not the MP), Nectar (or other loyalty scheme) points, usage information, dates, company addresses

Invoices – small business which have access to homes

Removed – all addresses MP and Supplier, name of supplier/small trader, signatures

Not removed – Name of person invoiced (even if not the MP), services provided, hours worked, rates of pay (unless we are informed by the supplier that this information is commercially confidential), dates etc

Invoices – Security expenditure

Removed – all details will be removed.

Till receipts

Removed – only credit card details and items not forming part of claim (if clear or known) -

Not removed – store details and location

Correspondence

General – all correspondence on the file will be published **unless it relates to advice only**

Removed – names of third parties and junior HoC staff, private addresses (including actual office address at HoC), MP telephone and email details, staff email and telephone numbers, employment details of MP's staff

Not removed – Generic HoC addresses, content of correspondence

Other information to be published as a result of FOI requests

Banqueting and meeting room details – names of Members booking rooms and the names of organisations sponsored

MEC Allowances Redaction Guidelines

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Specific examples

Transaction details

The transaction details will be added to a searchable database of payments taken from our electronic records. While these records do not describe all details of claims and payments they include a broad description of the amount claimed and identify the recipient of the subsequent payment. The database will be linked to the relevant file of scanned claims. Please check the data against your own records and let us know if you have any questions or comments about the information to be published.

If your name appears in the payee column, this means that the payment arising from your claim was a reimbursement to you of costs you have personally incurred. We ask you in particular to check the list of payees for the names of other individuals. While it is important to retain the identity of organisations to which payments have been made (including companies that trade under an individual's name), many payments are made to sole traders or other individuals. In the case of payments to your staff, we have endeavored to replace actual names by the description 'Staff reimbursement' but it is possible that some have been missed. However, we have not made global changes to all other recipients. If a name of an individual appears and is not related to a registered trading name or company please let us know and we will change this to 'Payment to third party individual'. Please note, this change will not be made to the names of registered professionals including accountants or solicitors.

Scanned information

As the IEP and Communications Allowance expenditure relates to business costs, only personal information has been removed. **Please draw attention to any residential addresses – these will be removed**

Claims forms

Removed - accounting and ID codes relating to each MP, details/annotations relating to security expenditure and the MP's address and signature.

Not removed - all other information will remain including staff annotation, staff initials, details of reduced or rejected payments, names of suppliers

Addresses

All office addresses have been retained. **Please draw attention to any residential addresses – these will be removed**

Invoices – large suppliers (e.g., BT, Sky, EDF)

Removed- residential addresses, account numbers, customer reference numbers, personal telephone numbers and email addresses

Not removed – name of person invoiced (even if not the MP), Nectar (or other loyalty scheme) points, usage information, dates, business/office addresses

Invoices – small business which have access to MPs' personal residences

Removed – all addresses MP and Supplier, name of supplier/small trader, signatures

Not removed – Name of person invoiced (even if not the MP), services provided, hours worked, rates of pay (unless we are informed by the supplier that this information is commercially confidential), dates etc

Invoices –Security expenditure

Removed – all details will be removed.

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Removed – only credit card details and items not forming part of claim (if clear or known) -

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