



Attorney General's Office
20 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0NF

General enquiries: 020 7271 2400
Direct line: 020 7271 2492
Fax: 020 7271 2434
e-mail: tim.strevens@attorneygeneral.gsi.gov.uk

Simon Wright
request-4281-d88e632d@whatdotheyknow.com

Our Ref: FOI|76|08

Date: 8 December 2008

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you your email of 24 November 2008 in which you made a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act') as follows:

- Since the labour government came to power in May 1997 has the Attorney General / office given any legal advice to any Government department in the United Kingdom on how best to describe the devolved administrations and parts of the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland).

I am unable to confirm or deny whether this Office holds any information falling within the terms of your request. This should not be taken as an indication that the information you requested is or is not held by the department. I consider that, in the circumstances of this case, the public interest in maintaining the exclusion of the duty to confirm or deny outweighs the public interest in disclosing whether or not this department holds the information.

Please allow me to explain my decision, Section 35(1)(c) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides that information is exempt information if it relates to the provision of advice by any of the Law Officers or any request for the provision of such advice. Section 35(3) and section 2(1)(b) together provide that the duty to confirm or deny does not arise in respect of information which is exempt (or would be exempt) under section 35(1)(c) if the public interest in maintaining the exclusion of the duty to confirm or deny outweighs the public interest in disclosing whether or not this Office holds the information.

By way of further assistance, in accordance with section 16 (Duty to provide advice and assistance), there is a statutory definition of England in the Interpretation Act 1978 and various other statutes also deal with the definitions of the constituent parts of the United Kingdom – I suggest you try checking Halsbury's Laws which is available in many libraries. Please note that the Law Officers cannot provide legal advice to members of the public.

If you believe that any of the decisions made in relation to your requests to us are incorrect, you may ask for an internal review. You should address a request for an internal review to Jonathan Jones, Director General, to 20 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0NF or alternatively you can send an email to foi@attorneygeneral.gsi.gov.uk.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

If you have any further queries about this matter please contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. A. Strevens', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

TIM STREVENS
Freedom of Information Officer