



Cabinet Office

1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

T +44 (0)20 7276 2294
foi.team@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk
www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

William Kidd
request-257609-61dcbb9d@whatdotheyknow.com

FOI Reference: FOI320801
1/4/2015

Dear William Kidd

I refer to your request where you asked:

“Under the Freedom of Information Act, please provide copies of emails, telephone summaries and letters in relation to award of MBE to Liz Male, Chair of Trust Mark”.

Your request has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established that the Cabinet Office does hold some of the information concerning your request.

The information you have requested falls within sections 37(1)(b), (the conferring by the Crown of an honour or dignity); and 40(2) in combination with 40(3) (personal information).

Section 37(1) (b) is not an absolute exemption and is subject to the public interest test which we have considered in relation to your request. We have weighed up whether the public interest is better served by release of this information or withholding it. We appreciate the importance of transparency in government which encourages public interest in and interaction with the work of government. We also recognise that there is a public interest in the workings of the honours system. However, this must be weighed against the importance of confidentiality with regard to individual honours cases, which is essential to protect the integrity of the honours and without which the system could not function. Non disclosure of information relating to individual cases ensures that those involved in the honours system can take part on the understanding that their confidence will be honoured and that decisions about honours are taken on the basis of full and honest information about the individual concerned.

Having considered all the circumstances of this case, we have concluded that the public interest is better served by withholding the information exempt under section 37(1)(b). I am also withholding the information under section 40(2) in combination with section 40(3), personal information. This provides that information is exempt from disclosure if it comprises personal data and disclosure would contravene one of the data protection principles in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). We consider that disclosure would contravene the first data protection principle which provides that data must be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless at best one of the conditions in schedule 2 to the DPA is met. We do not believe that any of the conditions are met. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and the Cabinet Office is not obliged to consider whether the public interest favours disclosing the information.

You may like to know that all honours recommendations are considered by one of nine expert honours committees, each chaired by a non-Civil Service chair and comprising a majority of independent members. All recommendations are considered on their merit and the level of award decided accordingly. You can find information about the composition of honours committees at www.gov.uk/honours-committees. You may also like to see the criteria for different levels of awards at www.gov.uk/honours/types-of-honours-and-awards.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the FOI team. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request or wish to request an internal review, you should write to:

Roger Smethurst
Head of Knowledge and Information Management
Cabinet Office
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

email: foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by Cabinet Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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

Yours sincerely



FOI Team
Cabinet Office