



Dr Emma L Briant  
[request-684755-62842d7e@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-684755-62842d7e@whatdotheyknow.com)

FOI: 59955  
27 August 2020

Dear Dr Briant,

Thank you for your e-mail of 16 August 2020, in which you requested information about the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) Independent Advisory Committee.

You asked specifically:

*Could you please tell me who from the Home Office and other related agencies in the UK Government sits as a representative on the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) Independent Advisory Committee - request name and role for transparency as well as a list of communications, meetings and the purpose/subject of discussion from 2019.*

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

With regard to representatives on the Independent Advisory Committee, I can confirm that the Home Office holds the information which you have requested. However, after careful consideration we have decided that this information is exempt from disclosure under Section 38(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This section of the Act pertains to health and safety and is a qualified exemption, which requires consideration of the Public Interest Test. Please find further details of this exemption in the Annex to this letter.

With regard to Independent Advisory Committee communications, meetings and the purpose/subject of discussion, I can confirm that the Home Office holds the information you have requested. However, we believe that the information is already reasonably accessible to you. It can be found on the GIFCT's website, <https://gifct.org/>.

Section 21(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 exempts the Home Office from having to provide you with this information, because it is already reasonably accessible to you. If you have any difficulties in accessing this information at the source which I have indicated, please contact me again.

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to [FOIRequests@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:FOIRequests@homeoffice.gov.uk), quoting reference **FOI: 59955**. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request will be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you remain

dissatisfied after this internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Yours sincerely

**Freedom of Information  
Home Office**

## **Annex**

### **Public Interest Test**

Some of the exemptions in the FOI Act, referred to as 'qualified exemptions', are subject to a public interest test (PIT). This test is used to balance the public interest in disclosure against the public interest in maintaining the exemption. We must carry out a PIT where we are considering using any of the qualified exemptions in response to a request for information.

The 'public interest' is not the same as what interests the public. In carrying out a PIT we consider the greater good or benefit to the community as a whole if the information is released or not. The 'right to know' must be balanced against the need to enable effective government and to serve the best interests of the public.

The FOI Act is 'applicant blind'. This means that we cannot, and do not, ask about the motives of anyone who asks for information. In providing a response to one person, we are expressing a willingness to provide the same response to anyone.

### **Public interest test in relation to section 38(1)**

#### **Section 38(1) – Health and Safety**

(1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to—

(a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or (b) endanger the safety of any individual.

### **Considerations in favour of disclosing the information**

There is a general public interest in disclosure and the fact that openness in government increases public trust in, and engagement with, the government. In relation to the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) Independent Advisory Committee, disclosure of representatives on the Committee could enhance the openness and transparency of government.

### **Considerations in favour of maintaining the exemption**

Disclosure of representatives on the Independent Advisory Committee could endanger the physical and mental wellbeing and the safety of individuals involved in organisations relating to matters of national security. Disclosing this information could result in individuals being identified and targeted, and could therefore put individuals at risk of harm.

### **Balance of the public interest**

We assess that safeguarding the wellbeing and safety of individuals is of paramount importance, and conclude that the balance of the public interest test lies in favour of maintaining the exemption and withholding the information.