



# Ministry of Defence

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Our Reference: FOI2019/09830

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Dr Emma L Briant <[request-591309-7171410b@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-591309-7171410b@whatdotheyknow.com)>

25 September 2019

Dear Dr Briant,

Thank you for your email dated 27 August 2019, acknowledged on 29 August 2019, requesting the following information:

*'Strategic Communication Laboratories (SCL) and/or IOTA Global (a related company) were placed on the List X database which applies to contractors carrying out work that bears a UK Government classification of SECRET or above. The classification is applied to individuals or groups of individuals and not the whole company. Therefore it is my understanding that individuals within the company must have undergone security checks. I believe individuals are classified by UK Government as follows: Counter Terrorist Check (CTC), Security Check (SC), Developed Vetting (DV) and Enhanced DV*  
*(<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2Fsecurity-vetting-and-clearance&data=02%7C01%7CSPODSR-SecretariatOffice%40mod.gov.uk%7Cb3a8cae2239d4ecef7808d72af79571%7Cbe7760ed5953484bae95d0a16dfa09e5%7C0%7C0%7C637025115158776688&data=yx10HWuROd%2FWFjZFKsgtyJDE%2BoCq1MXQFZ53yERCnyY%3D&reserved=0>),*  
*and that there are different time limits for renewal of each of these security checks for individuals in companies with List X status*  
*(<https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.uk%2Fguidance%2FUnited-kingdom-security-vetting-applicant&data=02%7C01%7CSPODSR-SecretariatOffice%40mod.gov.uk%7Cb3a8cae2239d4ecef7808d72af79571%7Cbe7760ed5953484bae95d0a16dfa09e5%7C0%7C0%7C637025115158776688&data=GWMHhoAyyWPaKLE4Nmpz6uf3MMBghLElcyxZR4b6aio%3D&reserved=0>).*  
*This is the 'classified status' I referred to in my initial request. I am interested in the dates from 2005-2018, and how many individuals it applied to, which individuals and for how long please? Please could this include specific dates when the status was granted/removed please.'*

Your email dated 22 July 2019, acknowledged on 30 July 2019, and replied to on 20 August 2019 under Ministry of Defence (MOD) Reference FOI2019/08514, requested the following information:

*'I'm writing to request information regarding who was granted classified status among staff at the UK Defence contractor Strategic Communication Laboratories (SCL), Behavioural Dynamics Institute (BDI) and IOTA Global please. Please could you tell me when this status was obtained and how long the status applied to each individual.'*

We are treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000.

A search for the information has now been completed within the MOD. We can confirm that some of the information requested in scope of your request is held. But we would not be able to answer

your request without exceeding the appropriate limit. This is because to identify, retrieve and extract the information in scope of your request would involve an intensive process and incur in the region of an estimated 640 staff days of effort.

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) MOD may be able to provide some information in scope of your request if you were to refine your request, which would reduce the amount of data to examine. Whilst it is not guaranteed that your refined request would fall within the cost limit, we would be happy to look at it again. You may wish to consider refining the time period and reducing the scope of your request.

Please be aware that any future requests may be subject to FOIA exemptions such as Section 12 (Cost), Section 24 (National Security) and Section 40 (Personal Data).

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Directorate of Security & Resilience