



Parliamentary  
and Health Service  
Ombudsman

By email only  
Ms Janet Treharne Oakley

20 May 2016

Dear Ms Treharne Oakley

**Re: Freedom of Information request - declarations of external interests register for board, committee and employees**  
(request-318968-708bb320@whatdotheyknow.com)

I am writing in response to your email of 30 March 2016 in which you requested a review of our handling of your information request. Under our internal complaints procedure your complaint has been passed to me for review. I should at this point acknowledge your further email of 31 March 2016. In this you expressed concern about my independence to carry out a review of your information request given my role in corporate governance. I can confirm that although I was aware of your information request I was not involved in our response to it.

I am therefore content that my review is compliant with the '*Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs' Code of Practice on the discharge of public authorities' functions under Part 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Issued under section 45 of the Act' section VI Complaints procedure paras 38-40. These stress that any request for a review should be 'handled in accordance with the authority's complaints procedure' (para 38), to 'enable a fresh decision to be taken on a reconsideration of all the factors relevant to the issue' (para 39), and 'the review should be undertaken by someone senior to the person who took the original decision, where this is reasonably practicable' (para 40). I am satisfied that my review meets these requirements.*

### Your information request

In an email of 28 February 2016 you asked for declarations of interest provided by Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) Board Members and employees.

### Our initial response

Aimee Gasston, Freedom of Information/Data Protection Team wrote to you on 30 March 2016. She clarified for you where you could access relevant information that we had previously published and she supplied you with additional declarations of interest relevant



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to PHSO Board members since 2012/13 that had been recently added to our Publication Scheme. She also confirmed that in respect of declarations of interest made by other members of PHSO staff these were maintained on individual HR records and as a search of these records would be onerous she concluded the exemption at section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) applied to this part of your request.

### **Your request for a review**


In your email of 30 March 2016 you requested a review in respect of your information request. In doing so you confirmed your request was for a register of external interests that included not only our non-executive directors but also 'senior managers and other decision makers'.

### **My Review**

I have reviewed your information request and the information that Ms Gasston supplied to you. I can confirm that although PHSO maintains a record of such interests within individual HR files there is not a central register of external interests such as you are seeking. The published list of annual declarations of conflicts of interest from our non-executive directors that Ms Gasston supplied in her response is the only information we have available that is within the scope of your information request. I am therefore satisfied that Ms Gasston was correct in her response to you and we have met all of our legal obligations to you in respect of information access legislation.

That concludes my review of your information request. If you consider that I have not dealt with it properly you can raise the matter with the Information Commissioner. He can be contacted at the Information Commissioner's Office. Their contact details are available at their website at [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve Brown', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Steve Brown  
Head of Risk and Assurance