Jack Maxwell
request-718356-dcc73f22@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Mr Maxwell

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – 210114016

Thank you for your request dated 14 Jan 2021 in which you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ):

Please provide the following information in relation to the Digital Categorisation Service (DCS):
(1) Please describe how the DCS suggests a provisional category for a prisoner. In particular:
(a) What data points does the DCS use to generate a provisional category?
(b) What weightings are assigned to those data points?
(c) How were those data points and weightings identified?
(d) If they were identified through machine learning, what training data was used in this process?

(2) Please provide an example or a template of the completed categorisation form which is available to a prisoner on request, once the categorisation decision using the DCS has been made.

(3) The evaluation report for the DCS pilot (see here: https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/656482/response/1589030/attach/7/Evaluati on%20Report.pdf) states that '[t]he distribution of appeals is quite varied across the pilot sites'. In light of the MoJ's analysis, for each of the pilot sites, please provide the following information:
(a) What was the frequency of appeals, and the proportion of these appeals which were successful, before the introduction of the DCS?
(b) What was the frequency of appeals, and the proportion of these appeals which were successful, after the introduction of the DCS?

Your request has been handled under the FOIA.

Please provide the following information in relation to the Digital Categorisation Service (DCS):
(1) Please describe how the DCS suggests a provisional category for a prisoner. In particular:
(a) What data points does the DCS use to generate a provisional category?

(b) What weightings are assigned to those data points?
(c) How were those data points and weightings identified?
(d) If they were identified through machine learning, what training data was used in this process?

I can confirm that the MoJ holds the information that you have requested and I have provided it below

(1) Please describe how the DCS suggests a provisional category for a prisoner. In particular:

(a) What data points does the DCS use to generate a provisional category?

Category C will be the most appropriate security category for most adults. Where an individual presents a level of risk that cannot safely be managed in Category C, then Category B will be appropriate (unless Category A is deemed necessary having followed PSI 9/2015). Where risk is assessed as low and the other factors identified apply, an individual may be assigned to Category D. In all cases the person completing the assessment will weigh up all available information and to arrive at a security categorisation outcome that reflects the individual circumstances of the case.

The Digital Categorisation Service (DCS) will suggest an initial category on the basis of a range of information and the categoriser can themselves suggest a category based on any information available to them and which they will record in the DCS. The range of information suggesting B may include any of the following:

- The person was previously Category A or has previously been held as Category A
- Categoriser indicates that security information suggests Category B should be considered
- The categoriser indicates that Further charges may warrant a Category B
- The individual has been recorded as being the perpetrator in a serious assault in custody in the past 12 months
- Escape risk: categoriser indicates it is sufficient to warrant a category B
- Extremism: Categoriser indicates there are previous terrorist offences
- Consideration of sentence type, for instance life imprisonment. The DCS will only suggest B for an indeterminate sentence prisoner.

For an individual being assessed for security category D it would be for the person assessing them to consider whether they are suitable according to the Security Categorisation Policy Framework.

(b) What weightings are assigned to those data points?

None.

(c) How were those data points and weightings identified?

As stated above no weightings are assigned. Data points reflect procedures set out in the Security Categorisation Policy Framework

(d) If they were identified through machine learning, what training data was used in this process?

DCS does not use machine learning nor was machine learning used in its development
(2) Please provide an example or a template of the completed categorisation form which is available to a prisoner on request, once the categorisation decision using the DCS has been made.

The MoJ does not hold any information in the scope of your request. In order to provide an example we would have to create data. There is no template.

(3) The evaluation report for the DCS pilot (see here: https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/656482/response/1589030/attach/7/Evaluati on%20Report.pdf) states that '[t]he distribution of appeals is quite varied across the pilot sites'. In light of the MoJ's analysis, for each of the pilot sites, please provide the following information:
(a) What was the frequency of appeals, and the proportion of these appeals which were successful, before the introduction of the DCS?
(b) What was the frequency of appeals, and the proportion of these appeals which were successful, after the introduction of the DCS?

I can confirm that the MoJ holds the information that you have requested. However, the information is exempt from disclosure under section 21 of the FOIA, because it is reasonably accessible to you. The information can be accessed via the following link (as quoted in your question) :
https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/656482/response/1589030/attach/7/Evaluation%20Report.pdf

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within two months of the date of this response.

data.access@justice.gov.uk

Disclosure Team, Ministry of Justice

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely

MoJ Digital and Technology