



Department of Health & Social Care

Freedom of Information Team
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU

www.gov.uk/dhsc

Mr Edward Blaise

By email to: request-904483-851e4bea@whatdotheyknow.com

4 November 2022

Dear Mr Blaise,

Freedom of Information Request Reference FOI-1420208

Thank you for your request dated 3 October to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), a copy of which can be found in the accompanying annex.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and we apologise for the delay in replying.

DHSC holds information relevant to your request.

DHSC has central guidance available to policy teams on the handling of both FOIs and internal reviews. Please see attached our **Freedom of Information guidance for DHSC staff**. Please note that this guidance was last updated in 2015 and we are currently undertaking work to update and re-issue the guidance. This means that some links may not work as we have taken them down. This guidance was also written at a time where Ministry of Justice provided advice to government departments on handling FOIs, this has since been taken up by the Cabinet Office.

Please also see attached:

- **Section 12 Guidance.**
- **DHSC's Things to Consider when answering a Freedom of Information request.**
- **DHSC's redaction guidance: transparency agenda requirements PowerPoint.**
- **DHSC's Inappropriate release guidance.**
- **DHSC'S initial request handling guidance.**
- **SCS clearance guidance.**

Please note that some of this information has been redacted across these documents under section 40(2) of the FOIA, which provides for the protection of personal information. Section 40 prohibits a public body from disclosing personally identifiable information, as doing so would contravene data protection principles. We have also redacted information under section 23 (information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters).

If you are not satisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to appeal by asking for an internal review. This should be sent to freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk or to the address at the top of this letter and be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communication.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have already appealed our original response and received our internal review decision. You should raise your concerns with the ICO within three months of your last meaningful contact with us.

Guidance on contacting the ICO can be found at <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us> and information about making a complaint can be found at <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint>.

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Team
freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk

Annex

-----Original Message-----

From: Edward Blaise <request-904483-851e4bea@whatdotheyknow.com>

Sent: 30 September 2022 22:15

To: FreedomofInformation <freedomofinformation@dhsc.gov.uk>

Subject: Freedom of Information request - FOI Policy

Please provide the following information:

1. Internal guidance documents or policy on responding to requests under the Freedom of Information requests
2. Internal guidance documents or policy on responding to internal reviews under the Freedom of Information Act.
3. Internal guidance documents or policy on referrals of the above to the 'Clearing House' used and referred to in government to handle certain requests under the Act.

The above only refers to current policy and documents and any archive or unused documents are not requested or required.

Yours faithfully,

Edward Blaise
