



Home Office

Immigration Enforcement
FOI and PQ Team
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Becca Martin
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www.gov.uk/home-office

9 December 2016

Dear Ms Martin

Re: Freedom of Information – 40890

Thank you for your e-mail of 25 August, in which you ask for information regarding Immigration Enforcement visits on East Street, Southwark. Your query has been handled as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You have asked us to provide the following information:

(1a) - I would like the date and (1b) time of each visit to a premises?

(2a) - The specific power of entry used for each visit? (e.g. warrant, AD letter from senior management, consent). (2b) if time constraints allow I would also like redacted copies of the proof of right of entry for each instance as well.

(3) - How many people did you have 'intelligence' on (e.g. a name, description) for each visit?

(4a) - How many people were detained on each visit? (4b) and, if possible, for what reason?

(5a) - If possible, how long was each person detained for and (5b) what was the action following detention? (eg. deportation, release etc.)

I am able to disclose some of the information that you have requested. A response to your request is at Annex A, which is attached.

With regards to the questions 1b, 2a, 2b and 3, I can confirm that the Home Office holds the information that you have requested. However, after careful consideration we have decided that the information is exempt from disclosure under section 31(1) e of the Freedom of Information Act.



Public interest test in relation to section 31(1)(e)

Law enforcement - which would be likely to, prejudice (e) the operation of the immigration controls.

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. Transparency and 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, including those who might represent a threat to the UK.

Considerations in favour of disclosing the information

There is a general public interest in openness and transparency in government, which will serve to increase public trust and promote public confidence in the operation of our immigration controls and in the way we carry out our work, in particular the removal of immigration offenders.

Considerations in favour maintaining the exemption

Against this there is a very strong public interest in safeguarding national security. It is important that this sensitive information is protected, as disclosure of information about operational working practices could damage national security and potentially undermine existing border controls and agreements with other countries, reducing their willingness to co-operate with the UK. Any disclosure that could prejudice national security would be contrary to the public interest.

Having considered the arguments above, I have concluded that it is in the best interests of the public to maintain the exemption in order to protect the Home Office's ability to respond to intelligence received regarding those living and working in the UK illegally strategically and that disclosure of this information could prejudice our ability to deploy teams strategically in future operations in the area.

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 the address below, quoting reference 40890. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.



Home Office

Information Access Team
Home Office
3rd Floor, Peel Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
E-mail: info.access@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

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

Immigration Enforcement

Freedom of Information and Parliamentary Questions Team