



Home Office

Corporate Services  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

020 7035 4848  
(switchboard)  
[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

Mr P. John

By email: [request-228507-cd863816@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-228507-cd863816@whatdotheyknow.com)

16 October 2014

Dear Mr John

**Freedom of information request (Ref: 32841)**

Thank you for your e-mail of 7 September 2014, in which you ask for information with regards to John Carr, the Director of NetIDMe.

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We have carried out a search and we can confirm that the Home Office holds some information within the scope of your request. This is set out in the enclosed **annex A**.

Section 40(2) (personal information) of the Act (by virtue of section 40(3)(a)(i)) is applicable to redactions made in the copies of email correspondence where names and contact information for third parties is given. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and I consider that disclosure of their names and contact information would be neither fair nor lawful in line with the first data protection principle, and would therefore be a breach of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Some of the information you have requested is exempt under section 35(1)(a) (formulation of government policy). Further explanation of this is set out in **annex B**.

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 32841. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

Information Access Team  
Home Office  
Ground Floor, Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
e-mail: [info.access@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto: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

**S. Khanom**  
**Information Access Team**

## Annex A

### Freedom of information request (Reference: 32841)

#### Request for information

**1. Does John Carr remain an advisor in any capacity to the Home Office?**

Yes.

**2. If so, on what topics?**

John Carr is an executive board member of the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS), which is co-chaired by the Minister for Policing, Criminal Justice and Victims; and has also been chaired by Damian Green, Jeremy Browne and James Brokenshire while they held the portfolio of online child safety. John has recently been involved in a UKCCIS Working Group looking at the future of UKCCIS operation and strategic direction.

**3. Any correspondence between the Home Office and John Carr or NetIDMe since 16/07/2014'**

The Home Office confirms it holds some information within the scope of your request. A copy of email correspondences (dated 30 July and 7 August 2014) falling within the scope of your request is enclosed. We have withheld a note of the UKCCIS Strategic Review meeting of 1 August 2014. This information is considered to be exempt from disclosure under the exemption at section 35(1)(a) of the Act. This exemption concerns prejudice to the formulation and development of government policy. Explanation of why this exemption is considered to be engaged towards your request and the balance of public interest is its' application is set out in the enclosed **Annex B**.

## **Annex B**

### **Freedom of information request (Reference 32841)**

#### Exemption at section 35(1) of the Act

Section 35(1)(a) states:

*Information held by a government department or by the National Assembly for Wales is exempt information if it relates to –*

*(a) formulation or development of government policy*

#### Consideration of the balance of Public Interest

Some of the provisions in the FoI Act are qualified and subject to a public interest test (PIT). This test is used to assess the balance of the public interest for and against disclosure of the information. The exemption under section 35(1)(a) is such an exemption. 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 in saying whether information is held or not. 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.

#### Public interest arguments in favour of disclosing the information

The Home Office recognizes that there is a general interest in openness and transparency in all aspects of government. Openness increases public trust and confidence in government. The release of information around policy development can potentially lead to greater engagement in political debate and policy discussions, as the public would become better informed on all aspects of the work of government.

#### Public interest arguments in favour of withholding the information

This exemption is applied to a note produced at a working group considering options for the future operation and activities for UKCCIS. Ministers have not had the options submitted to them for consideration yet. In order to develop robust and effective policies, it is essential that officials be able to advise and recommend freely and frankly to senior officials and Ministers without concern of premature release of material related to the formulation of policy before Ministers have the opportunity to consider options before implementing a policy. If this type of information were to be routinely released, it could have the effect of restricting the frankness of advice provided and would harm the 'safe space' available to officials to consider any related matters. It is also relevant that there is active consideration within Government regarding further policy in this area.

#### Conclusion

In all the circumstances of this case, I conclude the public interest in favour of withholding the information outweighs the public interest in favour of disclosure.