



Mr Jeremy Beakind

By email to: request-1174988-3d7a7430@whatdotheyknow.com

10 October 2024

Dear Mr Beakind,

Freedom of Information Request Reference FOI-1532165

Thank you for your request dated 15 September 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).

DHSC holds information relevant to your request.

Please see the attached seven documents. Please note that some information has been redacted 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.

With regards to the document titled "Prescribing Working Group Minutes - 3rd July 2024", please note the attachment to this email is being withheld under section 35(1)(a) of the FOIA, which provides protection for the information that relates to the formulation or development of Government policy. Section 35 is a qualified exemption and requires consideration of the public interest test.

DHSC recognises the general public interest in making this information available for the sake of greater transparency and openness. However, DHSC takes the view that the section 35 exemption is intended to ensure that the possibility of public exposure does not deter from full, candid and proper deliberation of policy formulation and development, including the exploration of all options.

Civil servants and subject experts need to be able to engage in the free and frank discussion of all the policy options internally, to expose their merits and demerits and their possible implications as appropriate. Their candour in doing so will be affected by their assessment of whether the content of such discussion will be disclosed.

Premature disclosure of information protected under section 35 could prejudice good working relationships and the neutrality of civil servants, and we have therefore determined that the balance of public interest favours withholding this information.

If you are not satisfied with the handling of this 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: Jeremy Beakind <request-1174988-3d7a7430@whatdotheyknow.com>

Sent: Sunday, September 15, 2024 8:08 AM

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

Subject: Freedom of Information request - Physician Associate Schools Council (PASC)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to make an official request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I would like to request copies of any emails sent or received by Mr Phil Harper, Deputy Director for Professional Regulation, related to the "Physician Associate Schools Council" (PASC) or containing references to "PASC". The scope of this request covers the period from 5th July 2024 to 15th September 2024.

If it would be possible to narrow the scope of this request in any way that would expedite its handling while still providing access to the relevant information, I would appreciate your advice.

Should any part of this request be exempt from disclosure, please provide a full explanation of the reasons for the exemption, along with details of the public interest test where applicable. Additionally, I request that any non-exempt information be provided in its entirety, with redactions applied only to the exempt material.

I look forward to your response within the statutory 20 working days as outlined in the Act.

Yours faithfully,
[Your Name]
