



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

Ms Amanda Hart
request-687845-3ab42ac4@whatdotheyknow.com

16 September 2020

Dear Ms Hart,

Freedom of Information Request Reference FOI-1251418

Thank you for your request dated 26 August, in which you asked the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC):

“Request: Please kindly provide a link to or attach a copy of all your PPE contracts over £10,000 as per the department’s legal obligations to do so.”

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

DHSC holds this information. However, we are withholding this information under Section 22(1), which states that public bodies are not obliged to disclose information that is intended for future publication. Procurement regulations require the publication of Contract Award Notices in the Official Journal of the European Union, and we publish certain information on Contracts Finder about the actual contracts awarded.

We consider that it is reasonable to withhold the contracts until the proposed publication as this is in line with the Department’s usual practice and is fair to all concerned. Releasing this information to you now may interfere with our established process for publishing details of these contracts to ensure that only accurate and validated data is released.

Section 22 is a qualified exemption, and we are required to assess as objectively as possible whether the balance of public interest favours disclosing or withholding the information. We recognise the general public interest in these contracts, and that disclosure leads to greater transparency in government. However, releasing this information to you now may interfere with our established process for publishing details of these contracts, and there is also a very strong public interest in ensuring that information is made available to everyone at the same time, thereby ensuring equity of access. For these reasons, we have concluded that the public interest in withholding this information outweighs that in its release. The Department takes the view that the public interest in the disclosure of this information will be satisfied by its publication in the future.

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 submitted within two months of the date of this letter and sent to FreedomOfInformation@dhsc.gov.uk, or to the address at the top 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.

The ICO can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

Yours sincerely,

Lauren Der
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FreedomOfInformation@dhsc.gov.uk