



Dr Emma L Briant  
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FOI: 58732  
13 July 2020

Dear Dr Briant,

Thank you for your email of 12 May 2020 in which you ask for the following:

- a) who heads RICU and who is their direct superior/line manager?*
- b) the current number of full, or part-time, staff working for RICU*
- c) the budget allocated to RICU in the current financial year*
- d) the cost of (i) publications issued by, (ii) advertising and promotion issued on behalf of and (iii) events held by RICU in 2019.*

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

- a) Information relating to question a) is being withheld at this time as it is exempt from disclosure by virtue of Section 38 (Health and Safety). Please find further details of this exemption in Annex A.
- b) The department does hold information relevant to your request. Information relating to question b) is being withheld at this time as it is exempt from disclosure by virtue of Section 24(1) (National Security). Please find further details of this exemption in Annex A.
- c) Details of 2020/21 spend will be available at the end of the financial year.
- d) The department does hold information relevant to your request. Information relating to question d) is being withheld at this time as it is exempt from disclosure by virtue of Section 24(1) (National Security). Please find further details of this exemption in Annex A.

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 [foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk), quoting reference 58732. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request would be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you were to remain dissatisfied after an internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the FOIA.

Yours sincerely

**Freedom of Information  
Home Office**

## Annex A – Public Interest Test

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 favour of withholding the information, or the considerations for and against the requirement to say whether the information requested is held or not. 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. 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.

### Section 24(1) -National Security

*24(1) Information which does not fall within subsection 23(1) is exempt information if exemption from section 1(1)(b) is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security.*

Public interest considerations in favour of disclosing the requested information:

The Home Office recognises that there is a general public interest in transparency and openness in government. Such openness would increase public understanding and inform public debate. In the context of this request, there is a public interest in being made aware of how the Home Office counters potential national security threats and protects UK citizens.

Public interest considerations in favour of withholding the requested information:

Disclosure of information would open up detailed information about organisations and individuals who are engaged in the delivery of, and who are supporting activities to counter potential national security threats. This may impact negatively on the delivery of Home Office policies, and on the range of activities deployed in support of those policies. This includes activity to disrupt those who promote terrorism, and protect individuals who are vulnerable to recruitment by extremists or terrorist groups. These factors would serve to undermine the effectiveness of the Home Office strategies, and hence weaken and prejudice the national security of the UK.

Balance of the public interest:

We consider that there is an overriding public interest in withholding the information you requested at this time. We consider that safeguarding national security interests is of overriding importance, and that in this instance, the public interest is best served by the non-disclosure of this information.

## Section 38 – Health and Safety

*38(1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to – (a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or (b) endanger the safety of any individual.*

*(2) The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that, compliance with section 1(1)(a) would, or would be likely to, have either of the effects mentioned in subsection (1).*

Public interest considerations in favour of disclosing the requested information:

The Home Office recognises that there is a general public interest in transparency and openness in government. Such openness would increase public understanding and inform public debate. In the context of this request, there is a public interest in being made aware of who works in the unit and who they report to.

Public interest considerations in favour of withholding the requested information:

Disclosure of information would open up detailed information about individuals who are engaged in the delivery of, and who are supporting activities to counter potential national security threats. This may impact negatively on those individuals concerned – including putting them at risk of physical and mental harm – as well as the delivery of Home Office policies, and on the range of activities deployed in support of those policies. This includes activity to disrupt those who promote terrorism, and protect individuals who are vulnerable to recruitment by extremists or terrorist groups. These factors would serve to undermine the effectiveness of the Home Office strategies, and hence weaken and prejudice the national security of the UK.

Balance of the public interest:

We consider that there is an overriding public interest in withholding the information you requested at this time. We consider that safeguarding national security interests is of overriding importance, as is the safeguarding of those individuals who carry out this work, and that in this instance, the public interest is best served by the non-disclosure of this information.