



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 Penelope Crouch

By email to: request-904463-b352d01a@whatdotheyknow.com

25 April 2023

Dear Ms Crouch,

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA): FURTHER AMENDMENT OF CASE
DHSC REFERENCES: IR-1424826 (FOI-1420207)
ICO REFERENCE: IC-204975-H2F7**

You originally wrote to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on 30 September 2022 requesting information relating to 'the scientific advice and evidence that was used when making the changes announced to the shielding policy in Sajid Javid's letter of 27 September 2021'. We responded to you on 26 October.

You subsequently emailed DHSC on 3 November requesting an internal review into the handling of your original request. The department partially upheld the decision in relation to your request.

The department then received notification from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) about your complaint, and a further response and a redacted version of a ministerial submission was sent to you on 20 January. The department have taken the opportunity to further consider the handling of your request.

Due to the passage of time since your initial request in September the public interest in withholding much of this information under section 35(1)(a) has now shifted in favour of release. Please see attached the version of the ministerial submission that is now unredacted in relation to section 35(1)(a).

Unless otherwise indicated all the information redacted in this current document has been done 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, and the names of civil servants below the SCS grade have been redacted.

In addition, one item (paragraph 18) is now being withheld under section 43(2) (Commercial Interests). Section 43 is a qualified exemption, and its application is subject to a public interest assessment, as the information is commercially sensitive. We have concluded that sharing the information asked for could prejudice the commercial interests of our suppliers and could impact on DHSC's current and future relationships. These factors outweigh any public interest in disclosing the information you have requested.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the ICO for a decision. The ICO can be contacted at:

The Office of the Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire, SK9 5AF

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

Yours sincerely,

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