

Mr Jack Maxwell
request-656482-f0845e2f@whatdotheyknow.com

data.access@justice.gov.uk

23 April 2020

Dear Mr Maxwell

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – 200324002

Thank you for your request dated 24 March 2020 in which you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ):

Dear Ministry of Justice,

I am seeking information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) in relation to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and HM Prison and Probation Service's (HMPPS) development of a digital categorisation tool (the tool) to assess the risk of a prisoner being involved in violence and disturbances and to inform decisions about prisoner management.

In particular, I am seeking the following information:

(1) Documents setting out the sites, dates and durations of the trials of the tool

(2) Documents describing the operation of the tool: What data points does the tool use in generating a risk rating for a prisoner? Were these data points identified through some machine learning or automated process and, if so, what training data was used in this process? What are the sources of the data which MoJ and HMPPS input into the tool? What kind of outputs does the tool generate (i.e. a numerical risk rating, a categorisation, etc.)? Were any propensity models, targets or distribution ratios developed in relation to the tool, giving an expectation of numbers per category?

(3) Documents describing the current and planned future deployment of the tool: Is the tool still being trialled? How widely is it currently used in the prison system? When and how it is planned to be rolled out to other prisons?

(4) Any assessments or evaluations of the tool, in respect of either the trials or its full deployment

(5) Any policy, guidance, educational or training documents regarding the tool or how MoJ or HMPPS staff are to use the tool

(6) Any equality impact assessments or data protection impact assessments in respect of the tool

In the event that you determine some of the information I have requested to be exempt from disclosure, please redact exempt information with black boxes, instead of snipping or excerpting, and please state which category of exemption you believe applies to the information.

If it is not possible to provide the information requested due to the information exceeding the cost of compliance limits identified in s.12 FOIA, please provide advice and assistance as to how I can refine my request, as required under s.16 FOIA.

Please let me know if you have any queries in relation to this request.

Your request is being handled under the FOIA.

I am writing to inform you that we are required to conduct a public interest test in relation to your request.

This test is being carried out because some of the information you have requested will be covered by exemption section 31(f) of the FOIA covering the maintenance of security and good order in prisons and perhaps other subsections of sec 31 dealing with protecting the work of law enforcement agencies.

As yet, we have not reached a decision but are aiming to provide you with a full response by 21 May 2020.

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within two months of the date of this response.

data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Disclosure Team, Ministry of Justice, 10.38, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely

Disclosure Team
Ministry of Justice