

# Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) Decision notice

Date: 5 September 2022

Public Authority: Cabinet Office Address: 70 Whitehall

London SW1A 2AS

# **Decision (including any steps ordered)**

- 1. The complainant has requested information concerning meetings between Cabinet Office officials and senior representatives of Greensill Capital.
- 2. The Commissioner's decision is that the Cabinet Office were entitled to refuse to comply with the request under section 12(1) of the FOIA, and that it has complied with its obligations under section 16(1) of the FOIA to provide adequate advice and assistance to the complainant. However, in responding to the request the Cabinet Office breached sections 10(1), 17(5) and 17(3)(b) of the FOIA.
- 3. The Commissioner does not require the public authority to take any further steps.

#### Request and response

4. On 27 July 2020, the complainant wrote to the Cabinet Office and requested information in the following terms:

'According to meeting records for the Cabinet Office on the gov.uk website, officials held several meetings with Greensill Capital and its representative, Alexander (Lex) Greensill.

25/07/2016 - Jeremy Heywood (with Greensill Capital) 19/10/2016 - Matt Hancock (with Greensill Capital)



03/07/2017 - Jeremy Heywood (with Greensill Capital) 07/11/2017 - Jeremy Heywood (with Greensill Capital) 09/02/2018 - Jeremy Heywood (with Lex Greensill) 30/04/2018 - Jeremy Heywood (with Greensill Capital) 06/08/2018 - John Manzoni (with Greensill Capital) 23/07/2019 - John Manzoni (with Greensill Capital)

For each of these meetings, could you please provide the following information:

- A full list of attendees, including full names and titles as well as who the attendee represents.
- The time and duration of the meeting, as well as the location.
- A copy of the meeting agenda.
- Meeting notes/minutes taken during the meeting, as well as any briefing notes and papers.
- Any materials handed out or received during the meeting or for the meeting such as presentations, brochures, reports.

Could you please also provide the same for any other meetings held between representatives of the Cabinet Office and Greensill Capital and/or Mr Lex (Alexander) Greensill in the time period from 24 July 2019 to date.

Please provide the information in electronic format, if possible. I would be grateful if you could let me know if you deem that the information cannot be provided in the time frame allotted to FOI requests, and help me refine the request if needed. It does sound straightforward as the names and dates are provided above'.

- 5. The Cabinet Office acknowledged receipt of the request on 8 August 2020 but did not provide a substantive response until 2 October 2020, more than two months later. The Cabinet Office apologised for this delay but provided no explanation for the same.
- 6. The Cabinet Office advised the complainant that they were unable to comply with her request as it exceeded the cost limit under section 12(1) of the FOIA. The Cabinet Office explained that:

'The reason that your request exceeds the cost limit is that the second part of your request asking for relevant information relating to meetings with 'representatives of the Cabinet Office' – this covers all employees of the department (approximately 7,000 staff). We estimate that even limiting the search to those at Senior Civil Service grade within the central department would still exceed the appropriate limit, excluding the time taken to determine if information relating to the list element of your request is held'.



7. The Cabinet Office suggested to the complainant that she may wish to refine her request by limiting it only to the meetings listed 'in order to bring the cost of determining whether the Cabinet Office holds relevant information, locating, retrieving and extracting it below the appropriate limit'.

- 8. The complainant responded to and followed the Cabinet Office advice on 7 October 2020, asking them to refine her request to the meetings listed 'without the second part of the request'.
- 9. The Cabinet Office wrote to the complainant on 28 October 2020 and advised her that they had started to consider her request, but that they required further information before they were able to proceed. They stated that, 'we need clarification as to what your request is for, as it currently appears to be exactly the same as a request we have already responded to'. The complainant replied on the same date and pointed out that her refined request was not the same as her original request, and that she had followed the Cabinet Office's advice in removing the second part of her original request.
- 10. The Cabinet Office subsequently wrote to the complainant on 4 November 2020 and informed her that they were extending the 20 working day time for providing a response as the information she had requested, if held, 'is potentially exempt under section 35 of the Act'. The Cabinet Office advised that they had not yet reached a decision as to whether the balance of the public interest favoured disclosure of the information.
- 11. The Commissioner would note that a public authority can only extend the 20 working day time limit where a qualified exemption has been formally applied, which did not appear to be the case from the wording of the Cabinet Office response of 4 November 2020.
- 12. A month later, on 3 December 2020, the Cabinet Office provided the complainant with their substantive response to her refined request of 7 October 2020. The response made no reference to section 35 and instead advised the complainant that 'unfortunately this narrowed request still exceeds the cost limit'.
- 13. The Cabinet Office advised the complainant that:

'Whilst we have established that some of the information you requested may be held by the Cabinet Office, we are unable to retrieve this information due to cost of searching additional records identified since your original request. The search would cover at least eight mailboxes and associated Google drives, of which the cost of searching would exceed the time limit identified above'.



14. The Cabinet Office advised the complainant to narrow her request further, 'such as through only requesting information about meetings with a specific individual over a short timeframe'.

- 15. On 3 December 2020, the complainant wrote to the Cabinet Office and requested an internal review of the response. She stated that she found it hard to believe that her request exceeded the cost limit. Referring to the Cabinet Office statement that their search would need to cover at least eight mailboxes and associated Google drives, she questioned, 'I have asked for meeting information relating to three individual's meetings with one company. Do the three individuals each have two or three email addresses through which they conduct government business? That would appear rather unusual, would it not?'
- 16. The complainant contended that the timeframe of her refined request was already very short, in that in each case she had indicated the exact date of the meeting. She stated that:
  - 'Therefore, locating list of attendees, the time and duration, and relevant material provided during the meeting (in other words on those particular days) would require an individual to navigate to the individual calendar date (or physical diary if that is how the record is held) and pull out the attendee record and time, location and duration. In terms of reviewing emails, usually mailboxes offer filters by date and keyword. I cannot conceive of any way that this would take one person 3.5 days of work unless they were inefficient to the extreme'.
- 17. The complainant asked the Cabinet Office to clarify what they meant by the reference to 'additional records identified' since her original request and noted that her original request was subsequently narrowed, not widened, so she did not understand the point the Cabinet Office was making.
- 18. The Cabinet Office provided the complainant with their internal review on 12 January 2021.
- 19. The review advised that the Cabinet Office had considered the complainant's points about the amount of time that any search for the information would take. The Cabinet Office explained that a number of the relevant mailboxes were archived, which meant that it would take significantly more time to locate, identify and extract relevant information from them than from current mailboxes or diaries. The Cabinet Office confirmed that the estimate provided took into account the need to search the mailboxes and Google drives of relevant individuals, including the individuals referenced in the request, and their private offices.
- 20. The Cabinet Office explained that some of the mailboxes in scope of the request were archived, and each archived mailbox takes one working



day to acquire, convert into a searchable format, and to carry out, record and report on searches. The review therefore maintained that searching the archived mailboxes would take at least 24 hours and that the cost limit was appropriately engaged.

21. In response to the comment about additional records queried by the complainant, the Cabinet Office advised that since the time of her original request, they had found additional mailboxes and Google drives which may be relevant. The Cabinet Office stated that this 'significantly expands the scope of the search needed and the time required to search for the requested information'. However, the review acknowledged that the previous response should have made clear that the additional mailboxes and drives identified after the request were not related to the complainant having narrowed her request, and should have provided some further context about the additional mailboxes and drives to make the point clear.

# Scope of the case

- 22. The complainant contacted the Commissioner on 12 January 2021 to complain about the way her request for information had been handled.
- 23. In her complaint to the Commissioner the complainant stated:

'As you will see, the Cabinet Office claims that there are 8 email addresses and hard drives, even though I asked for information from 3 individuals only. Their suggestion that there are other hard drives and emails is somewhat concerning, given that the ICO has previously found Michael Gove using his wife's email addresses to conduct government business. If it is true that Cabinet Office officials are this slow at reviewing information, there ought to also be a case for releasing part of the information which can be fulfilled. The longer they stall the more information will be archived'.

- 24. The complainant contended that 'there is great public interest in understanding why of all supply chain financing companies Greensill Capital has had such regular meetings with the Cabinet Office. Greensill Capital's bank in Germany is under regulatory scrutiny, while numerous of Greensill's clients have collapsed, including due to fraud allegations'.
- 25. The complainant also stated that her request had been handled by the Cabinet Office 'Clearing House', despite it not being a round robin or complex. The complainant contended that, 'I therefore think it should not have been handled through this channel, which has been shown to have deliberately blocked and stalled FOI requests prompting lawmakers to call for an investigation'.



- 26. Towards the end of his investigation, having received detailed submissions from the Cabinet Office, the Commissioner was mindful of the considerable and important public interest surrounding the Government's interactions and dealings with Greensill Capital and the complainant's understandable and legitimate attempts to further more openness and transparency on this issue. Consequently the Commissioner explained to the complainant that as he could not assess or address these important public interest matters in the context of her current complaint (section 12 not being subject to the public interest test), and a more practical and productive course of action might be for her to submit a further refined request (such as for information held about one meeting only) to the Cabinet Office for the same type of Greensill related information.
- 27. The complainant advised the Commissioner that she understood that section 12 is not subject to a public interest test, but noted that in their correspondence with her, the Cabinet Office had invoked section 10(3) of the FOIA (Cabinet Office email of 4 November 2020, which referenced section 35 of the FOIA) and so she believed that 'the public interest aspect and background to all this is indeed relevant'. The complainant stated her firm belief that the Cabinet Office's poor handling of her request, and other related requests, 'is interwoven with their reluctance to make public interest material available if it sheds a critical light on its inner workings as the Greensill saga has clearly shown'.
- 28. Consequently, the scope of the Commissioner's investigation in this case has been to determine if the Cabinet Office correctly cited section 12(1) of the FOIA to refuse the complainant's refined request of 7 October 2020.

#### Reasons for decision

29. Section 12(1) of the FOIA states that:

'Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit'.

- 30. The appropriate limit is set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 ('the Fees Regulations') at £600 for central government departments such as the Cabinet Office. The Fees Regulations also specify that the cost of complying with a request must be calculated at the rate of £25 per hour, meaning that section 12 effectively imposes a time limit of 24 hours.
- 31. In estimating whether complying with a request would exceed the appropriate limit, regulation 4(3) of the Fees Regulations states that a



public authority can only take into account the costs it reasonably expects to incur in:

- Determining whether it holds the information;
- Locating the information, or a document containing it;
- Retrieving the information, or a document containing it, and
- Extracting the information from a document containing it.
- 32. A public authority need not make a precise calculation of the costs of complying with a request, and only an estimate is required. However, it must be a reasonable estimate. The Commissioner considers that any estimate must be 'sensible, realistic and supported by cogent evidence'.
- 33. Section 12 is not subject to a public interest test. Therefore, if complying with the request would exceed the cost limit then there is no requirement under the FOIA to consider whether, despite this being the case, there is a public interest in the disclosure of the information.
- 34. It is also important to appreciate that if complying with *some* parts of a request would exceed the cost limit, then a public authority can rely on section 12 to refuse to comply with *all* parts of the request. That is to say, a public authority is not obliged to address those parts of the request that would not trigger the cost limit, and even if only one part of the request triggers the cost limit, then the entire request can be refused on the basis of section 12.

## The complainant's position

- 35. As the complainant has noted, the scope of her refined request was 8 meetings on specific dates involving three individuals from Government meeting with Greensill Capital (Greensill). Specifically, the former Cabinet Secretary, Jeremy Heywood (later Baron Heywood of Whitehall, who died on 4 November 2018), Sir John Manzoni, Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary between 2014 and 2020, and Matt Hancock (Minister of State for Digital and Culture in October 2016).
- 36. In her complaint to the ICO, the complainant stated that she did not believe that searching three people's mailboxes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century would comprise 24 hours of full time work, 'particularly because the dates of the meetings are very specific'. The complainant also expressed her concern about the Cabinet Office advice that there were

<sup>1</sup> Randall v IC & Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency EA/2007/0004.

7



at least eight mailboxes and associated drives to search, given that she had asked for information from three individuals only.

- 37. The complainant stated that if it really were the case that it takes a full day to extract and search a mailbox, then one would hope that the government would implement a more efficient way of archiving and extracting information at taxpayer's expense. She noted that 'we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and technology has moved on'. The complainant also sought assurance that the mailboxes were actually archived, as of the individuals named in the request, only Baron Heywood was deceased.
- 38. The complainant also noted that in their response of 2 October 2020 to her original request of 27 July 2020, the Cabinet Office did not refer to the retrieval of the archived mailboxes being an issue from a costs perspective. Rather, the Cabinet Office stated that the reason for the complainant's request exceeding the cost limit was due to the second part of her request, which encompassed other meetings held with Greensill other than those specifically referenced. The complainant contended that, 'I would have expected this (archived mailboxes) to have been mentioned, particularly as the Cabinet Office is now underlining just how much time they think retrieving archived material takes'.

## The Cabinet Office's position

- 39. The Cabinet Office provided the Commissioner with detailed submissions in support of their application of section 12(1).
- 40. The Cabinet Office confirmed that they do not have a central or specific location for storing information concerning meetings of ministers and civil servants with Greensill.
- 41. In submissions to the Commissioner the Cabinet Office explained that their policy is for all digital corporate documents to be created and managed within authorised repositories using the electronic document and records management (EDRM) system. Staff are also required to identify and transfer to the relevant shared drive within the EDRM system any email conversations that they believe are of sufficient importance to be retained for the record.
- 42. The Cabinet Office confirmed that in addition to the inboxes and Google drives of the three individuals (from the Government side) named in the request, the inboxes and Google drives of their private secretaries, and shared mailboxes, would also have needed to be searched for relevant information. Information in senior leader and ministerial mailboxes is secure and always retained for evaluation of its long-term records value in accordance with the department's Retention & Destruction Policy.

43. The Cabinet Office advised that ministers and senior officials rarely do administrative work in organising meetings, or provide written outcomes of meetings themselves, with private secretaries doing the bulk of this work, which is why multiple mailboxes and Google drives are in scope of the request. In addition, ministers and senior officials could potentially have information regarding meetings in their individual inboxes, given that they use them for day-today work, such as meeting papers and advice sent by officials.

- 44. The Cabinet Office elaborated that multiple mailboxes and Google Drive could be in scope of the request because each minister and senior official has an office with several private secretaries who support them in their day-to-day work. These private secretaries manage a shared mailbox, alongside their personal mailboxes, in which the bulk of the work relating to these meetings would, in practice, be recorded. The Cabinet Office also advised the Commissioner that some arrangements may also be recorded in side chains of email correspondence between individual private secretaries and copied to the personal and shared mailbox accounts of the individuals named in the request.
- 45. In respect of the Google drives, the Cabinet Office advised that each private secretary and office have a Google Drive managed by the department's EDRM application, in which they can store official information. The individuals/offices identified by the Cabinet Office as potentially having relevant information in their inbox would also have a Google drive that could contain information.
- 46. The Cabinet Office explained that information relating to the logistics of meetings (such as attendee lists, locations and agendas) would most likely be contained in the diary secretary's or policy private secretary's mailbox or Google drive. This is because both the policy and diary privates secretaries have responsibilities relating to these issues. The diary secretary is likely to have responsibility for location and attendee lists, and the policy private secretary for the agenda, given that they will often discuss an agenda with an external or internal stakeholder's staff before a meeting.
- 47. The Cabinet Office also noted that the request also asked for materials handed out during the meetings, or received ahead or after the meetings. They explained that any such materials would most likely not be held by the private office but would be contained in the policy private secretary's inbox or shared drive, given the policy private secretary will be responsible for liaising with a stakeholder on matters to be discussed ahead of a meeting, or follow-up from areas discussed in the meeting. More generally, the Cabinet Office stated that the office mailbox could also reasonably be deemed to have information relevant to each part of the request.



- 48. In respect of the additional records identified by the Cabinet Office after the complainant submitted her original request, the Cabinet Office explained that at the time of responding to that request, they had not taken into account a range of private secretaries (including the diary secretary) who could hold relevant information in their mailbox or Google drive. The Cabinet Office advised that this omission did not alter the section 12 refusal of the original request because they had already spent 3 working days working on some of the archived mailboxes identified at that earlier point.
- 49. With regard to the non-archived mailboxes, the Cabinet Office advised the Commissioner that searching, extracting and retrieving any information from them and the Google drives of the Cabinet Secretary and Chief Executive private offices was estimated to take at least two hours to complete for each mailbox, and for each Google drive. An official would need to search through this information to find any relevant documents and information. The Cabinet Office explained that such searches would be complicated by the fact that they would not be confined to the day of the meeting. Instead, to thoroughly search through the mailbox an official would need to look through a number of weeks before and after the meeting, given that an agenda, and time and location of a meeting will be set in advance, and any readout or outcome of a meeting will be given after the meeting. The Cabinet Office also noted that the information requested by the complainant was broad in nature, requiring several searches given that several different pieces of information were requested for each meeting.
- 50. In submissions to the Commissioner, the complainant recognised that searching multiple mailboxes in addition to the ones belonging to the three officials named in her request would require additional work hours. However, the complainant rejected the Cabinet Office's contention that reviewing messages a few weeks before and after the dates of the specified meetings would have added a significant workload. The complainant noted that "Greensill" is a rather unusual keyword and so would not require a huge amount of sifting to exclude irrelevant material. The complainant noted that 'modern technology also affords searchers the ability to type a keyword in once and cover a large time span, and if this returned numerous other "hits" these would be likely relevant to the query'.
- 51. The Cabinet Office noted that they had advised in the internal review that the non-archived mailboxes would therefore taken a minimum of eight hours in total. In practice, the Cabinet Office advised that this time required would be higher, given that the office of Matt Hancock's Google drives and mailboxes would also need to be searched.



52. In respect of the three archived mailboxes, the Cabinet Office provided the Commissioner with a detailed description of what would be required to search these.

- 53. For search and extraction, the mailbox would need to be located, converted into MBox format, downloaded to an operator's hard drive, uploaded into Mozilla Thunderbird, and then searched. Time for download and upload would vary, depending on the size of the mailbox and sometimes mailboxes needed to be broken up into many parts to avoid a timeout. The Cabinet Secretary mailbox, for example, had been separated into seven parts and Jeremy Heywood's personal mailbox into four parts. Each part needed to be down/uploaded and searched individually.
- 54. Relevant information, having been located within part of a mailbox, would then need to be extracted as a .txt file and saved to a relevant drive location. Consequently, each archived mailbox would take one working day (8 hours) to acquire, convert into a searchable format, and carry out, record and report on searches.
- 55. The Cabinet Office therefore advised the Commissioner that they estimated that searching three archived mailboxes that they identified when undertaking searches (the Cabinet Secretary's private secretaries, and John Manzoni), would take at least 24 working hours.
- 56. In correspondence with the Cabinet Office, the Commissioner noted that whilst the time estimate was possibly valid for the proposed extraction and analysis method, it would seem a convoluted way of achieving the end result. The Commissioner noted that Google Vault includes an ediscovery function which allows an administrator to search archived mail for specific terms, review and extract the results. This would be a much more direct and rapid way of performing the search than the way proposed by the Cabinet Office.
- 57. In supplemental submissions to the Commissioner, the Cabinet Office advised that Google Vault was not available to the department at the time of the complainant's request. The department's accounts did not have access and Vault had not been set up. The Cabinet Office explained that their approach had recently changed to speed up the process. The Digital Knowledge & Information Management (DKIM) team now carry out searches in Google Vault (rather than having to use Thunderbird as previously).
- 58. In response to a query from the Commissioner as to whether a resubmitted request from the complainant for the same information would still exceed the appropriate limit, the Cabinet Office advised that DKIM were of the view that it would. The Cabinet Office explained that:



'We would still need to search all of the mailboxes and drives listed in our original response, then identify the information relevant to the request, download it and then upload it (one down/upload for each search carried out) before being able to provide a text file. Answering the complainant's request requires detective work as the information is not neatly set out in discrete email exchanges but is scattered throughout a significant number of emails received over the course of many weeks'.

59. The Cabinet Office confirmed that no sampling exercise was carried out, 'reflecting our detailed understanding of the required steps and repositories (mailboxes and Google drives) in scope'.

## Commissioner's conclusion

- 60. The Commissioner would agree with the complainant's contention that modern technology is such that key-word searches can be utilised to identify relevant information held if in electronic format and public authorities would be expected to employ such facilities to significantly reduce the time taken for searches in section 12 cases.
- 61. The Commissioner also considers that the complainant makes a reasonable point in noting that given that the aspect of her request which brings it over the appropriate limit is the archived mailboxes which fall within the scope of the request, it would have been expected and helpful for the Cabinet Office to have informed her of this in their response of 2 October 2020. That response stated that it was the 'any other meetings' aspect of the request which presented a problem in respect of section 12, which is why the complainant removed this part of her request from her refined request of 7 October 2020.
- 62. However, these points aside, based on the information provided by the Cabinet Office, the total time needed to carry out reasonable searches in this case would have been at least 32 working hours, the bulk of this time (indeed, what takes the request over the costs limit) being that required to search the three archived mailboxes. Consequently, the Commissioner is satisfied that the Cabinet Office appropriately relied on section 12(1) of the FOIA to refuse to comply with the complainant's refined request of 7 October 2020.
- 63. Based on the information provided by the Cabinet Office, the Commissioner is satisfied that, at the time of the complainant's request, the Cabinet Office considered the quickest and most effective way of locating, retrieving and extracting information from the archived mailboxes, and that they did not fail to utilise a quicker means of undertaking these tasks which was available to the department at the time.

#### **Procedural matters**



### **Section 10 - Timeliness**

## Section 17 - Refusal of a request

- 64. Section 10 of the FOIA states that responses to requests made under the Act must be provided 'promptly and in any event not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt'.
- 65. The complainant made her original request on 27 July 2020 and did not receive a substantive response until 2 October 2020, over two months later. In submissions to the Commissioner the Cabinet Office advised that a section 12 response had been drafted and cleared earlier than October, but due to an administrative oversight, it was not issued as it should have been. The Cabinet Office repeated their apology to the complainant for the delay. The Cabinet Office failed to comply with section 1(1)(a) of the Act in not confirming to the complainant, within 20 working days, that they held the requested information. The Cabinet Office is therefore in breach of section 10(1) of the FOIA.
- 66. Section 17(5) of the FOIA states that a public authority which, in relation to any request for information, is relying on a claim that section 12 or 14 applies 'must, within the time for complying with section 1(1), give the applicant a notice stating that fact'. The Cabinet Office therefore also breached section 17(5) of the Act in respect of the complainant's original information request.
- 67. Section 17(3)(b) of the FOIA states that a public authority which, in relation to any request for information, is to any extent relying on a claim that subsection (1)(b) or (2)(b) of section 2 applies, must, either in the notice under subsection (1) or in a separate notice given within such time as is reasonable in the circumstances, state the reasons for claiming
  - (b) that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
- 68. In their response of 4 November 2020 to the complainant's refined request of 7 October 2020, the Cabinet Office advised her that they were extending the time limit for providing a response under section 17(3)(b) as the information was 'potentially exempt under section 35 of the Act'. However, in their subsequent substantive response of 3 December 2020, the Cabinet Office made no reference to section 35 and instead refused the refined request under section 12(1). In submissions to the Commissioner the Cabinet Office explained that they identified that a small amount of information deemed to be in scope of the refined request engaged section 35 (formulation or development of government policy) before the broader assessment of a possible section 12 refusal had been established. The extension of time letter was therefore issued



in error. The Cabinet Office noted that they should have acknowledged this error either in the response of 3 December 2020 or at the internal review stage.

69. The Cabinet Office therefore breached section 17(3)(b) as they wrongly applied the public interest extension provision to the request.

#### Other matters

- 70. The Commissioner would note that whilst the Cabinet Office demonstrated good and helpful levels of engagement with his office during the investigation of this matter, the handling of the complainant's requests was notably poor and unsatisfactory.
- 71. As noted, it took more than two months for the Cabinet Office to provide a substantive response to the original request. Then, when the complainant acted upon the advice provided by the Cabinet Office, and limited her refined request to the specified meetings only (having been informed by the Cabinet Office that this would bring her request below the appropriate limit), the Cabinet Office initially failed to recognise that the request had been refined and sought unnecessary clarification, then misapplied section 35, and finally refused the refined request under section 12.
- 72. The combined effect of the above was to significantly and unnecessarily delay the provision of the Cabinet Office's substantive response to the complainant's request. This was most unsatisfactory, especially in a case where the request was for information concerning an issue of strong and topical public interest.
- 73. The Commissioner would impress upon the Cabinet Office the need to take due care and attention when receiving information requests, ensuring that exemptions are applied correctly and that requesters can have confidence in any advice and assistance provided.



# Right of appeal

74. Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from:

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights) GRC & GRP Tribunals, PO Box 9300, LEICESTER, LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0300 1234504 Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: <a href="mailto:grc@justice.gov.uk">grc@justice.gov.uk</a>

Website: www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-

chamber

- 75. If you wish to appeal against a decision notice, you can obtain information on how to appeal along with the relevant forms from the Information Tribunal website.
- 76. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

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