

23 March 2016

Our Ref: e18754

Re: Request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Your request for information which was received on 1 March 2016 has been considered.

Please find our response below.

Your request:

a) The number of children (under-18s) referred to the local authority due to concerns that they are vulnerable to extremism. I would like this information to be broken down by the following years: 2014-15, 2013-14, 2012-13, 2011-12

For each year I would like this information to be provided on an anonymised case basis, including the following information:

- a. date (dd/mm/yyyy)*
- b. age of child referred (if you are only to provide information by age brackets, please do so)*
- c. religion of child referred*
- d. ethnicity of child referred*
- e. source of the report (ie. school professional, college professional, medical professional, member of the public)*
- f. reason for referral (if you are unable to release specific information, please indicate if the reason falls within any of the following categories: viewing radical material online; possessing radical material such as leaflets or books; demonstrating support for terrorist groups through other non-violent behaviour; demonstrating support for terrorist groups through violent behaviour)*
- g. whether or not the report was passed on to the police*
- h. whether or not the child was added to the child protection register*
- i. whether or not the child has been taken into care*

b) How many Prevent coordinators work for the authority? If this number has increased over the past 4 years, please indicate when and how many additional coordinators were recruited.

c) What is the local authority's budget for prevent? Please provide figures for the years 2014-15, 2013-14, 2012-13 and 2011-12.

Our response:

a&c) We consider that this information is exempt in accordance with Section 24 National Security & Section 31 Law Enforcement. Please see Appendix 1 for further details.

b) We confirm we have no Prevent co-ordinators.

Kind regards

Data Protection & Information Officer

Appendix 1

s.24 (National Security)

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

We have considered our response in the wider context of the potential impact any decision to release information could have on individuals and local and national partners. We note that disclosure may assist an individual to build a mosaic picture of various councils across the country providing them with an implication of areas most at risk.

Considerations in favour of disclosing the information

There is a general public interest in disclosure and the fact that openness in government increases public trust in, and engagement with, the government. In relation to the Channel programme, the disclosure of some information could enhance the openness of government and help the public understand, in greater depth, how the government is responding to a range of factors that can draw people into terrorism or pull people away from it.

It is also in the public interest to be assured that the government's counter terrorism strategy is robust and appropriate.

Considerations in favour of withholding the information

There is a serious terrorist threat to the United Kingdom and disclosing this information into the public domain could put national security at risk by jeopardising or negating the government's efforts to prevent acts of terrorism and terrorist related crime.

We have determined that safeguarding national security interests is of paramount importance and that in all circumstances of the case it is our opinion that the public interest test clearly favours the non-disclosure of information covered by section 24(1).

Section 31 (Law Enforcement)

Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice-

(a) the prevention or detection of crime

As explained, we consider that disclosure may undermine the Council's partners in the prevention of crime. Disclosure undermining trust in any Channel activity would be detrimental to the process especially if it affected individuals previously engaging with Channel.

Considerations in favour of disclosing the information

Disclosing the number of children (under-18s) referred to the local authority due to concerns that they are vulnerable to extremism will reassure the public that Prevent activity is being undertaken to ensure individuals who may be vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism are being supported by the Channel project. Anything that allows the public to feel reassured about the work of the government and partner agencies, and will therefore lead to an effective challenge to those that seek to damage the communities in and around the UK would be in the public interest to disclose.

Considerations in favour of withholding the information

Organisations and partner agencies, are given reassurances that information submitted will be treated in the strictest of confidence. Releasing the information requested would increase concern around the identification of individuals in the process – irrespective of whether identification actually takes place. Disclosure of this information could erode trust in the Channel process from partners. This would undermine the successful delivery of Channel.

It is also likely that any individuals receiving support through Channel would perceive their trust has been compromised through a reduction in the confidentiality associated with the process, impacting in their engagement in the process. Disengagement would threaten the successful delivery of Channel and therefore its aim – the prevention of crime.

We have determined that prevention of crime is of paramount importance and that in all circumstances of this case it is our opinion that the public interest clearly favours the non-disclosure of information covered by section 31(1)(a)

You have the right of appeal against the decision. If you wish to appeal please set out in writing your grounds of appeal and send to:

Corporate Complaints and Access to Information Manager
Community Engagement and Accountability Team
Adult and Community Services
3rd Floor Civic Centre
44 York Street
Twickenham
TW1 3BZ

E-mail: foi@richmond.gov.uk

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal appeal you may appeal further to the Information Commissioner's Office at:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
fax: 01625 524 510
DX 20819
www.ico.org.uk

