



Ministry
of Defence

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Email: [REDACTED]

23 January 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 4th November requesting the following information:

“Please provide a copy/copies of all assessments made in relation to the potential for the Ebola virus being used as a weapon. By weapon I mean that the virus could be used to inflict bodily harm, physical damage or death to a human.

** Please provide a copy/copies of all MOD-specific strategy documents in relation to dealing with Ebola.”*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held. I apologise for the late response.

The information you have requested can be found enclosed at annex A, but some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemption provided for at section 40 (Personal Data) and qualified exemption provided for at sections 26 (Defence) of the FOIA and has been redacted.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

Section 26 is a qualified exemption and is subject to public interest testing which means that the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Section 26(1)(a) and (b) has been applied to some of the information because it contains details whose disclosure would prejudice the capability and effectiveness of our armed forces and the safety of UK citizens. The balance of public interest was found to be in favour of withholding the information given that, overall, the public interest is best served in not releasing these details as it would to provide a tactical advantage to our enemies and for these reasons I have set the level of prejudice against release of the exempted information at the higher level of “would” rather than “would be likely to”.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that the MOD does not have specific strategy documents as we follow those issued by Public Health England as the lead Department for the protection of the nation's health and wellbeing. Full information on their Ebola virus disease: clinical management and guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely,
DST-Strategy Secretariat FOI Focal Point