



Ministry
of Defence

Ministry of Defence
D3, Building 405
Corsham
Wiltshire SN13 9NR
United Kingdom

Ref. FOI2015/07957

E-mail: ISSHQ-MB-GroupMailbox@mod.uk

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

23 September 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for email of 11 September 2015 requesting the following information:

- "1) Any guidance, manuals or other instructions issued to civil servants or other Government staff relating to the use of any "Instant Messenger" systems incorporated in the computer/email systems used by the department.*
- 2) Any guidance, manuals or other instructions issued to civil servants or other Government staff relating to how records from any "Instant Messenger" systems are stored and whether they fall within the scope of the Freedom of Information Act.*
- 3) Are any "Instant Messenger" systems included on email accounts provided to the Secretary of State, ministers and/or special advisers? If so, please provide figures for how frequently it is used."*

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

An initial search for the information you requested has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and I can confirm that some of the information in scope of your request is held.

Defence Information Infrastructure (DII) users within the MOD have access to Microsoft Office Communicator which is an instant messaging service. Joint Service Publication (JSP) 747 contains Instant Messenger (IM) Protocol 004 which provides specific guidance relating to instant messaging; DII official guidance is also available. I have included both these documents in my covering email to

you. I have also provided a link to the MOD's Acceptable Use policy referred to in the attached documentation:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/225439/JSP740_AUP_Version_1.pdf

The guidance which I have attached to my email explains that no records from Instant Messenger are automatically saved. However, should an individual choose to save a message, this would be in scope of any freedom of information request as it qualifies as recorded information.

Section 40(2) has been applied to the DII Official Guidance. The screen shots have been removed 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.

In response to question three, there is no information held. This is because although Office Communicator is available to all DII(F) users, the accounts of the Secretary of State, Ministers and Special Advisors are not subject to special monitoring, and therefore we are unable to provide any usage figures.

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.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Information Systems and Services Secretariat