

Information Released under Freedom of Information Act

Subject: Request for details of who purchased information from Companies House Webcheck

Date Released: 15 July 2014

Summary of request: The enquirer requested details of who purchased company information from Companies House Webcheck

Information released

Information can be retrieved from searches via our WebCheck service if a '.chargeable' product was downloaded. If this service was used to simply view a company record then no information will be logged or retained, it is only when an 'orderable' product is downloaded that information is stored because financial and other information needs to be retained.

We are not able to keep a record of all transactions for searches on individual companies as searches can be performed via WebCheck, Companies House Direct or independent private organisations. These searches can be made via the internet through the post over the telephone and customers can also walk into our search centres and pay cash to purchase or view information.

I must emphasise that whilst we could trace and retrieve some information about searches made via WebCheck, the information could not automatically be disclosed to you. Details that we could trace may be considered to be personal information and as such would be exempt under section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as disclosure would directly contravene the Data Protection Principles. We could not disclose the identity of the searcher without seeking the express permission from the searcher.

We would consider disclosing information of this nature, if it is held, if a request was received from the Police in connection with a criminal investigation, although I must add that we need the request to be specific, giving details of the information required, for example the actual name of any individual you are interested in, it should only be for information that is essential to an investigation. If Companies House is able to retrieve information relative to the request, we must have some assurance that the information being released will be used correctly and solely for the purposes of that investigation. I am sure you will appreciate that as a public authority we have to take every precaution in these matters.