



Ministry
of Defence

Ministry of Defence
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Ref: FOI2015/06730

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13 August 2015

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 28 July 2015 requesting the following information:

“Can you please provide the names of all Special Advisers attached to your Department (as of the date of receipt of this message - 28 July)? I would be grateful if this information could be broken down by the relevant minister they advise.”

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 some information in scope of your request is held.

I must inform you that the Cabinet Office published a comprehensive list of Government wide Special Advisers on an annual basis and the information that MOD holds is therefore subject to Section 22(1)(a) of the FOIA.

Section 22 (Information Intended for Future Publication) is a qualified exemption and therefore subject to public interest testing. In applying this exemption we have had to carefully balance the public interest in disclosing the information against the public interest in withholding the information.

We accept that the benefits of release include increasing public knowledge; however, releasing information ahead of official publication would ultimately weaken the Transparency Agenda approach and the mechanism of reporting. For the reasons outlined above we consider that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

The outcome of the Public Interest Test is that this information is exempt under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act and is therefore being withheld.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that the Cabinet Office last published the annual update of Special Adviser details on November 30th 2014. This information can be found at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/388696/SpAd_list_as_at_30_november_2014.pdf

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, <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Top Office Group Business Manager Deputy