



Ministry
of Defence

Ministry of Defence

Defence Business Services Secretariat
Room 6303
Tomlinson House
Norcross
Thornton-Cleveleys
FY5 3WP

Ref: FOI2021/00706

Email: DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk

12 February 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your emails of 13 January 2021 and 19 January 2021 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) requesting the following information:

“can you advise me please what the official departmental policy is regarding the retention of records in relation to email accounts, etc? I assume that these would not normally be deleted for a specified period following the departure of the individual concerned, and would be very interested to know the prescribed duration for the retention of such information.”

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 can confirm that if an individual leaves the Department their MODNET user account will be retired. After the account is retired the user will no longer have access to MODNET and their Microsoft Office 365 Licence will be removed. All data in the users OneDrive and email account will be deleted after 30 days and will not be recoverable after this point.

However, if the users account remains open (if they move to another post within the Department), the account with their OneDrive data and emails will move with the user.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that MOD Policy does not provide specific information about retention of emails in general. Email subject matter may determine different retention periods and the official line is, *“emails themselves are fundamentally the same as any other official document, and so need to be managed in line with relevant legislation and Departmental policies and rules.”*

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Business Services (Secretariat)