



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Equipment and Support
Secretariat
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Ministry of Defence
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Email: DES SEC-PolSec LE-JSC-WPNS@mod.uk

Email: [REDACTED]

Our Reference:
FOI2022/14739
Date:
09 January 2023

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 08 December 2022, requesting the following information:

I am writing to request under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act some information concerning the disposal of surplus RAF Sentinel R1 surveillance aircraft

Since the aircraft were retired from RAF service in March 2021 what has happened to them, in particular:

- 1. How many of the airframes have been sold?*
- 2. Were any aircraft sold with operational radar sensors and mission systems still on board?*
- 3. Could you name the customers and provide a brief description what they are now being used for?*
- 4. How much revenue has been generated to date from the sale of surplus Sentinel R1 aircraft, radar sensors and other support equipment?*
- 5. How many aircraft and radar sensors are still held by the MOD? Are efforts still underway to sell them and when does the MOD estimate they will all be sold?*
- 6. Where were the aircraft, radar sensor and support equipment stored prior to their disposal?*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act). A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and some information you have requested has previously been published; Section 21(1) of the FOI Act provides that information is exempt if it is reasonably available by other means.

The number of Sentinel aircraft sold and the buyer has been discussed in Parliament and published in Hansard; the details can be viewed on the [Hansard website](#). The number of aircraft originally procured and the location in which the aircraft and their equipment have been stored has been published on the [RAF website](#). I can confirm that the aircraft and equipment have remained at RAF Waddington throughout the disposal process.

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None of the Sentinel aircraft were sold with operational radar systems and mission systems on board, and the MOD holds no Sentinel aircraft or associated radar systems.

It has proved necessary to withhold some information in accordance with qualified exemptions of the FOI Act. The sale price of the aircraft has been withheld under qualified exemption Section 43(2) (Commercial Interests). Section 43 concerns information which if disclosed would or would likely prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including defence contractors and the public authority holding it). Releasing information on the sale price of the aircraft would prejudice negotiations between the consortium, their supply chain, and their customers. Releasing information on the planned future use of these aircraft and potential customers for the consortium would also jeopardise negotiations between the consortium and potential buyers. Releasing this information would also prejudice MOD's commercial interests by impacting on its ability to interest companies in bidding to sell its out of service equipment.

Given the arguments described above, on balance, it was determined that the information should be withheld under Section 43(2) (Commercial Interests). The level of prejudice against release of this exempted information has been set at the higher level of "would" rather than "would be likely to".

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,

DE&S Policy Secretariat