

FOI reference: FOI2025/05758

10 July 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

We refer to your request where you asked:

*"Dear FOI team,
I wish to make six different Freedom of Information Act requests. For your administrative convenience, I am placing them in the same letter.*

Request #4

My request relates to this answer to a Parliamentary Question.

Q: To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office on 16 January (HC22996), whether they will place in the Library of the House a copy of the template form or questionnaire that Ministers are required to complete as part of the ministerial interests process set out in Part B, Chapter 3 of the Ministerial Code.

A: As set out in the Ministerial Code, the List of Ministers' Interests is published on a quarterly basis and provides details of those interests held by ministers that are judged relevant for publication by the Independent Adviser on Ministerial Standards. Information about the process by which ministers declare interests, including details of the categories of interest declared, is available in the introduction to the List of Ministers' Interests, which is already published.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-02-03/HL4626>

Please provide the information requested in that question. I also wish to ask whether any forms or request is made about the past criminal record of a Minister.”

Following a search of our records, we have established that the Cabinet Office holds the information you have requested.

This information is being withheld because it is exempt under section 36(2)(b)(i) and 36(2)(c) of the Freedom of Information Act because, in the opinion of a qualified person, its disclosure would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank provision of advice and its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.

Section 36 is a qualified exemption and we have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours our release of the material. We recognise that there is a public interest in understanding how decisions are made on the management of ministers' interests and in transparency around the interests process more generally. However, there is also public interest in favour of withholding the information in order to maintain the effective functioning of the ministers' interests process by ensuring that ministers have confidence that the process is confidential. Lack of confidence in the confidentiality of the process could negatively affect the process overall, including how ministers participate and how advice is requested or provided by officials and the Independent Adviser on Ministerial Standards within that process.

It is also important to note that the government's duty to transparency with regard to the management of ministers' interests in general is satisfied by regular reports by the Independent Adviser on Ministerial Standards and the List of Ministers Interests. Furthermore, the public interest in understanding what ministers are asked to disclose in their declarations of interests is satisfied by the published "Guide to the Categories of Interest", which can be found on page 6 of the latest published List of Ministers' Interests:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67c063e516dc9038974dbc54/List_of_Ministers_Interests_-_February_2025.pdf We can confirm that the form does not ask ministers to declare criminal convictions (which are not considered 'interests' for the purposes of the ministers' interests process). Therefore, on balance, I find that the public interest lies in favour of withholding the information you have requested.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request or wish to request an internal review, you should write to:

Head of Freedom of Information
Cabinet Office
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

email: foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Cabinet Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. B. M.', is written over a faint, light blue circular stamp. The signature is fluid and cursive.

FOI Team
Cabinet Office

