



Cabinet Office

Our Ref: MP636639

Rt Hon George Howarth MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

15 March 2016

Dear George,

Thank you for your email of 3 March on behalf of a number of your constituents about the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act).

The Government has welcomed the report of the Independent Commission on Freedom of Information (Commission), which provides a well-balanced package of recommendations to enhance transparency and improve the effective operation of the FOI Act. This Government remains fully committed to transparency and is pleased that the Commission has made a series of recommendations to increase accountability across the public sector.

The Government's response to the Commission has been published. A copy can be found at the following link:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/open-and-transparent-government>

The Commission made no formal recommendations on extending the FOI Act.

In relation to outsourced services, we have introduced a range of measures to increase transparency. Central government bodies are required to publish all procurement opportunities, tenders and contracts over £10,000 on Contracts Finder, and to publish spend over £500 on data.gov.uk. Last year, the Government also introduced the Transparency Principles, including a presumption in favour of disclosure of information when entering into a contract with a supplier where only information that genuinely affects a supplier's commercial position should be withheld, for example, intellectual property.

Yours Sincerely

THE RT HON MATTHEW HANCOCK MP