



14 November 2022

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FOI: 63470
ICO reference: IC-139957-Z7N2

Dear Requester,

As you will be aware, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has contacted us as part of an investigation into a complaint you have made about our handling of your Freedom of Information (FOI) request.

By way of brief background: you made your request via email on 29th March 2021, and we responded on 3 June 2021; you subsequently sought an internal review on 14th July 2021, to which we responded on 15th September 2021; you subsequently complained to the ICO and we are writing following receipt of a letter from the ICO about your complaint.

Your request was as follows:

- 1. The number and percentage of prevent referrals that 'Required no further action' disaggregated by ethnicity and type of concern for the years 2015-2016, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.*
- 2. The number and percentage of prevent referrals that were 'sign-posted to other services' disaggregated by ethnicity and type of concern for the years 2015-2016, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19*
- 3. The number and percentage of prevent referrals that were 'discussed at a channel panel' disaggregated by ethnicity and type of concern for the years 2015-2016, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.*
- 4. The number and percentage of referrals discussed at a channel panel that were 'adopted as a channel case' disaggregated by ethnicity and type of concern for the years 2015-2016, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.*
- 5. The number and percentage of referrals discussed at a channel panel that were 'not adopted as a channel case' disaggregated by ethnicity and type of concern for the years 2015-2016, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.*
- 6. The number of referrals 'adopted as a channel case' where the concern is identified as relating to 'Islamist extremism' disaggregated by ethnicity for the years 2015-2016, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.*
- 7. The number of referrals 'adopted as a channel case' where the concern is identified as relating to 'Right-Wing Extremism' disaggregated by ethnicity for the years 2015-2016, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.*
- 8. The number of referrals 'adopted as a channel case' where the concern is identified as relating to 'mixed, unstable and unclear ideology' disaggregated by ethnicity for the years 2015-2016, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19.*

We have reconsidered our original response and I am now able to provide a revised response.

With the exception of ethnicity data which was withheld under section 24(1) (National security), you will recall that we provided you with the information you originally requested.

As previously explained, the Home Office, does not hold data on ethnicity for all individuals referred to the Prevent Programme. This data may be held by Counter Terrorism Policing Head Quarters. We do hold incomplete data on ethnicity as recorded by the case officer of those referred to Prevent that were discussed at a Channel Panel and either adopted or not adopted as a Channel case. We have decided to partially disclose breakdowns for these three categories, disaggregated by ethnicity, as recorded by the case officer, and type of concern for the years you requested in the accompanying annex. We therefore are no longer relying upon section 24.

Please note that the breakdown of figures has not been provided where the total is less than 10; this has been withheld under section 40(2) (Personal information). Information where the breakdown results in figures which is less than 10 is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), because of the condition at section 40(3)(a)(i). This exempts personal data being shared if disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles in Schedule 1 to the DPA. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption, which does not require a public interest test.

We have also withheld disclosure of breakdowns where the figure is less than 10 under section 38(1)(Health and safety. In our view, disclosure of such low numbers would allow individuals to be identified (or mis-identified) and would be likely to place them at risk of harm. Please see the Public Interest Test in Annex A for more information.

Please also note the below caveats with the data that we hold:

- The recording of ethnicity is not mandatory on the Home Office Channel central case management system as we use ethnicity data for operational case management purposes rather than for statistical analysis. This means that there is a lot of missing data and the data that is recorded may not be representative of the entire Channel population and should not be generalised to the wider Channel population.
- Ethnicity is an important aspect of any individual's identity and one of the many factors which may or may not have an impact on an individual's radicalisation. As the goal of the Channel process is to reduce an individual's vulnerability to radicalisation it is important that all potential factors relevant to an individual's specific case are considered. Capturing a range of information about a vulnerable individual is a key part of the Channel process at the information gathering stage, as the multi-agency Channel panel will not know all the aspects determining any individual's vulnerability at the outset of the process.

Whether or not ethnicity is relevant to the management of a specific Channel case is dependent on the context of that individual's specific mix of vulnerabilities to, and protective factors from, radicalisation. In some cases an individual's ethnicity is relevant to the management of their case, and so it is recorded. In other cases, ethnicity, whilst still important to an individual's identity, is not a relevant factor

around their vulnerability to being radicalised specifically. In these instances, ethnicity would not be recorded on the Home Office system.

This means that the ethnicity of a significant proportion of individuals who have been discussed and adopted at a Channel panel is unknown. This proportion ranges from 20% to 41% of the total, depending on the year and the subset of data. The data is therefore not representative of the Channel case population and should not be generalised to all Channel cases.

- Our case management data is based on the ethnicity of the individual as recorded by the case officer. It is not based on self-defined ethnicity. The data may therefore not always be accurate since it relies on the assessment by the case officer.
- We do not routinely publish the breakdown by ethnicity as recorded by the case officer in our published statistics because the non-mandatory nature of this field limits the usefulness and quality of this data for statistical purposes. Therefore, we are releasing to you data that has not been quality assured to the same degree as the datasets in our published statistics.
- The breakdown of figures has not been provided where the total is less than 10 for the reasons referred to earlier in this response.

Taking the above caveats into account, this mean that this dataset is almost certainly not an accurate representation of the ethnicity breakdown of all individuals discussed, adopted and not adopted at Channel. Therefore any conclusions drawn from this information could be incorrect.

Any use of this data **must** be accompanied by these caveats to ensure that the public are provided with the fullest possible picture around this release.

Please note that a copy of this response has been sent to the case officer dealing with your complaint in the office of the ICO, and so if you are dissatisfied with this reply you may complain directly to them.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information
Home Office

Annex A – Public Interest Test

Section 38 – Health and safety

(1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under the FOI Act would, or would be likely to—

(a) endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or (b) endanger the safety of any individual.

Considerations in favour of disclosing the information

There is a general public interest in openness and transparency in government, which will serve to increase public trust. There is a public interest in members of the public being able to access data relating to the ethnicity of Channel referrals.

Considerations in favour of withholding the information

There is a considerable risk that if an individual who has been discussed, adopted, or not adopted, at a Channel panel is made identifiable by disclosure of breakdowns where the figures are less than 10 that they could be targeted, potentially endangering their mental and physical health. There is also a further risk of wrongful identification, where someone mistakenly targets an individual based on the breakdowns where the figures are less than 10 being disclosed. In this case the victim of this wrongful identification would be likely to have their mental and physical wellbeing impacted.

Individuals who have been adopted to Channel have consented to the process in an effort to reduce their vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism. Disclosing breakdowns where the figures are less than 10 would be likely to endanger individuals' mental and physical wellbeing and place them at risk from those who support terrorism and seek to damage the UK's interests.