



Department of Health

17 February 2017

FOI-1069346

Dear Dr Alexander,

Thank you for your request of 23 January 2017 under the Freedom of Information Act (2000). Your exact request was:

“Please can the Department disclose all correspondence about the establishment, terms of reference of and selection of ‘members’ (or whatever term that the Department uses) for the Just Culture Taskforce, that was sent and copied to, or by, the Secretary of State, Tim Jones, Paul Stonebrook and officers of the NHS Litigation Authority including Suzette Woodward.

Please also advise what funds the Department has allocated to this project, what period this funding relates to and when and how funding will be reviewed. Please advise of any outcome measures that the Department has identified for evaluating the performance of the Just Culture Taskforce.

Please could you also clarify whether, given that this has been identified as a project by the Department of Health, which involves Departmental staff, any records of proceedings / activity by the Just Culture Taskforce will be subject to Freedom of Information provisions and Department of Health policy on Equality and Diversity.

Please could you also advise me of the email addresses for Tim Jones and Paul Stonebrook.”

We are not providing the email addresses for Tim Jones and Paul Stonebrook, as personal data about officials is exempt from disclosure pursuant to section 40(2) of the FOI Act, which provides for the protection of personal information which would not otherwise be available in the public domain, as disclosing this information would contravene data protection principles.

With regard to your other requests, the Department of Health does not hold this information as a Just Culture Taskforce has not yet been established.

The External Advisory Group for the Healthcare Safety Investigations Branch published its report last year *Improving safety investigations in healthcare*. This concluded that there should be a concerted and coordinated action from across the system, based on careful and coordinated analysis from a wide

group of experts and stakeholders to promote a 'just culture' in healthcare.
The recommendation states:

"We recommend a Just Culture Task Force be established, bringing together safety and improvement experts with representatives of the legal and complaints systems, healthcare professionals, and patient and families representatives. This should determine the appropriate policies, practices and institutional arrangements that are required to move the healthcare system firmly towards a just culture of safety."

James Titcombe and Martin Bromiley were asked by the Department of Health to consider the best way of initiating this, and three other individuals were invited to contribute to these discussions. They are not a formally constituted body.

The Department has expressed its willingness to support the actions arising from this work (consultation and stakeholder engagement) by providing a secretariat, and has envisaged a small level of funding, yet to be agreed, should the need arise for meeting venues, catering, and other expenses.

If you have any queries about this email, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:

Head of the Freedom of Information Team
Department of Health
Room G18
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Email: freedomofinformation@dh.gsi.gov.uk

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

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

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy Crowe

Freedom of Information Officer
Department of Health

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