

Our ref: **NIC-22020-96JQY**

24th March 2009

Dear Mr Easton,

Re: Information Request – Freedom of Information Act 2000

I can confirm that the NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care has considered your query dated the 25th

of those emails under the Freedom of Information Act as they are directly germane to an understanding of how, in the words of Sir Michael Scholar, unchecked figures were published and how their premature release was 'corrosive of public trust in official statistics, and incompatible with the high standards which we are all seeking to establish.'

I have some understanding of the contents of those emails which have been referred to in published official correspondence and Select Committee testimony and I am intending to refer to details. In the interests of accuracy it would be better to have sight of the documents and I would be grateful if you could consider releasing them to me without the need for a formal FOI request."

I would like to see any relevant material relating to when the TKP data was sent to the Home Office this may have been with other departments DH or Number 10 as well as the Home Office"

In response to your query for correspondence at the time the data was published, I can confirm that the NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care does hold the data requested. However, the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) on the 5

th March
published a series of emails relating to the release of knife crime statistics in December 2008 (which includes the email communication between the NHS Information Centre and the Department of Health). The said documents can be accessed via the following link:

www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/public_administration_select_committee/pasc0809pn20.cfm

As the information is publicly available it is therefore exempt under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI). As you may be aware, the FOI Act allows the NHS IC to refuse to provide information held if an exemption applies. Section 21 of the FOI Act provides an exemption from the duty to provide information if the information requested is reasonably

accessible by other means. This exemption is absolute and therefore not subject to a public interest test.

In relation to the communication between the NHS Information Centre and the Home Office at the time the information was sent please find attached a copy of an email sent on the 26th November 2008. In addition the following footnotes were attached to the data:

Copyright The data supplied is covered by copyright.

Assessing growth through time

HES figures are available from 1989-90 onwards. During the years that these records have been collected by the NHS there have been ongoing improvements in quality and coverage. These improvements in information submitted by the NHS have been particularly marked in the earlier years and need to be borne in mind when analysing time series.

Some of the increase in figures for later years (particularly 2006-07 onwards) may be due to the improvement in the coverage of independent sector activity.

Changes in NHS practice also need to be borne in mind when analysing time series. For example, a number of procedures may now be undertaken in outpatient settings and may

I will assume that your request to the organisation is now closed.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Shippen
Higher Information Governance Officer