

Our Ref: FOI/Req/17/107

Ms. Maeve Sheehan,
Sunday Independent,
Independent House,
27-32 Talbot Street,
Dublin 1.

11 July 2017

Dear Ms. Sheehan,

I refer to your request dated 13 June 2017 made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, for records held by this Department. Your request sought:

- 1. A copy of the audit report on funding allocated by the Department to the suicide charity Console's UK branch, and spending of same.*
- 2. Correspondence and records relating to the recommendations of the audit, and any follow up action taken by the Department.*

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 21 June 2017. I have identified eleven records that fall within the scope of your request. I have made a decision to refuse access to all records. Where access has been refused, the records have been exempted from release by virtue of the following sections of the Act; Section 29 - Deliberations of FOI Bodies, Section 30 - Functions and negotiations of FOI bodies and Section 32 - Law enforcement and public safety as outlined in the enclosed schedule.

Under Section 29 of the Act (Deliberations of FOI Bodies), I have considered whether the public interest would be better served by releasing the record in question in terms of the right of the public to have access to information and the need for transparency in decision making processes. Given the nature of the record I am satisfied that its premature release would negatively impact ongoing internal discussions. On balance the public interest is best served by not releasing this record at this time.

Records have also been exempted under Section 30 of the Act (Functions and negotiations of a FOI Body). I have considered the nature and source of the information. Public interest arguments I have considered for release include the right of the public to access information and accountability of administrators. However, on balance I consider that premature release may negatively impact any investigations that may take place without any countervailing benefit to the public.

Under Section 32 of the Act (Law enforcement and public safety), I have considered the possibility and likelihood that the release of the records could result in negative consequences and their likely severity. In particular, release at this time could impair any future court proceedings that may take place and on balance I have decided not to release this record.

Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 or by email to foi@dfat.ie. A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfat.ie, or 01-4082857.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

Yours sincerely,

Orla Tighe-McMahon
Deputy Director, Irish Abroad Unit