



Ref: 6003

Section 17 Notice under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

WITHHOLDING INFORMATION

Section 36(2)(b)(i) – Disclosure of the information would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank provision of advice

Section 36(2)(b)(ii) – Disclosure of the information would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation

You have requested any correspondence from 23.7.13 onwards between the Director of Public Prosecutions and (a) Women's Aid, (b) Refuge, and (c) Rape Crisis. Disclosure of this information could lead to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and external groups being more circumspect in their provision of advice and in putting their views forward in relation to the handling of domestic abuse cases. As a result discussions in future could be inhibited with the effect that the CPS's approach to the formulation of policy is less informed.

This is a qualified exemption which means that the decision to disclose the requested material is subject to the public interest test.

The public interest factors taken into account in this case are explained below:

Public interest factors for disclosure

- There is a clear public interest in members of the public being aware of what factors have been taken into account to inform government policies. This is especially true where it relates to such a sensitive area of the CPS work.

Public interest factors against disclosure

- At these meetings CPS staff and key stakeholders are able to freely and frankly provide advice and exchange views for the purpose of deliberation without the fear that their recommendations and consideration of options relating to domestic violence will be released into the public domain. There is a strong public interest in protecting safe space for these meetings to ensure that informed decisions can be made based on all the relevant information. Free and frank discussions of problem areas within domestic abuse prosecutions and the wider support network run by other organisations would inevitably be hindered by the knowledge that their views may one day be put into the public domain.

On balance we believe the public interest favours withholding the information. Disclosure of the material would not add significantly to the public debate and release would prejudice CPS functions.