



Freedom of Information Request FOI 23 135

Non emergency numbers for control

Query:

I request a direct non-emergency telephone number and email address for your control room (or, where you have more than one control room, the aforementioned for each such control room).

Please note that I am not seeking your switchboard telephone number and that I do not seek to “jump the queue”, so to speak, but simply to make contact directly with your control room in circumstances where that is required without having to engage with your switchboard.

In order to assist, I believe that the telephone number I am seeking is likely to be that on which calls from your switchboard to your control room are forwarded.

Response:

The telephone number for our control room for non-emergencies is 0306 799 0019. Please note this number is NOT to be used in the case of any emergency, as this number is not answered as a priority. In the case of an emergency please always use the 999 number.

We can confirm we do have an email which goes directly to our control room, however under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act, a request for information can be refused where one or more exemptions listed in the Act apply. In this case we are claiming the following exemptions in relation to the release of the direct email address for our control room:

Section 24

Section 24 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act states information can be withheld if it is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security. Section 24 is a qualified exemption, which means that it is subject to a public interest test.

We acknowledge the public interest in openness and transparency, but we consider that there is also a public interest in the Service protecting national security. The public interest in favour of disclosing would mean that the requestor would have a direct contact to our control room meaning potentially quicker access to the answers for questions they have.

However disclosing our control room email address could put DWFRS control room at a much greater risk of cyber-attacks. Consequently, this could have an adverse impact on our ability to mobilise fire appliances and therefore the UK’s security. We have therefore concluded that this exemption applies and that non-disclosure serves the public interest better than release in this instance.



Section 38

Section 38 of the Freedom of Information Act states that information is exempt if its disclosure under the act would, or would likely to, endanger the physical or mental health of an individual or endanger the safety of any individual. Section 38 is a qualified exemption, which means that it is subject to a public interest test.

We acknowledge the public interest in openness and transparency, but we consider that there is also a public interest in the Service to protect the health and safety of our staff and members of the public. The public interest in favour of disclosing would mean that the requestor would have a direct contact to our control room meaning potentially quicker access to the answers for questions they have.

However disclosing our control rooms email address could endanger the health and safety of members of the public . The direct email address for DWFRS control room is not closely monitored and this means any mail would not be classed as a priority contact and therefore emails would not be answered in a timely manner. This could result in emails of an emergency nature sitting in the inbox, not being responded to. The result of this could put members of the public at risk of harm or death. We acknowledge that the requestor has stipulated that they would not use this information to report emergencies, however the Freedom of Information Act states that all requests for information should be treated equally. Therefore, if another person requests this information we would have to release it and could not guarantee that they would not use this for an emergency.

For these reasons, we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Information/Detail accurate on the date provided: 16, October 2023