



[REDACTED]  
Our Reference: FOI 1871

By email: [REDACTED]

Date: 28 April 2016

Dear [REDACTED]

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Further to my letter/email of 5 April 2016 acknowledging your request for information which was received by us on 4 April 2016, I am now in a position to respond.

You requested the following:

***I would like to know how many attempts - successful or non-successful - minor cyber attacks have been carried out on departmental computers over the past three years: 2013, 2014 and 2015.***

***I want to know about the following types of attacks:***

- 1. DDoS (Direct Denial of Service)***
- 2. Adware***
- 3. Phishing***
- 4. Tampering***
- 5. Spoofing***
- 6. Bluejacking***
- 7. Password attacks***

I am handling your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

The information that you have requested is being withheld from disclosure under Section 31 (3) of the Act (law enforcement).

Section 31 (3) states that:

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[food.gov.uk/ratings](http://food.gov.uk/ratings)



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

The duty to confirm or deny does not arise if, or to the extent that compliance with section 1(1)(a) would or would be likely to, prejudice any of the matters mentioned in subsection (1).

The relevant subsection applied to this request is section 31(1)(a) which states that:

1. Information which is not exempt by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under the Act would, or be likely to, prejudice-

(a) The prevention and detection of crime,

As section 31 (3) is a qualified exemption, we have considered the public interest test for and against disclosure. In favour of disclosure we recognise there is a general public interest in openness and transparency, especially with regards to cyber security. We recognise that disclosure would provide assurance that the FSA is working to ensure that its IT systems are not rendered vulnerable to attack.

However, in favour of not providing or confirming the existence of the information, we consider that, in this instance, public disclosure regarding the number of successful or non-successful minor cyber attacks would prove useful to those wishing to harm FSA IT systems, as disclosure of the number of attempts could enable individuals to deduce how successful the FSA is in detecting cyber attacks. This may assist them in their criminal activities and enable them to continue their attacks or may damage any attempt to identify them via law enforcement agencies.

Attacks on the FSA's IT systems could themselves constitute a crime or create a vulnerability to criminal activity. Consequently, on balance, we have decided that it is not in the public interest to provide the confirmation sought.

Please note that all the information that has been provided in response to this request will be published on the FSA website in due course.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me on the details provided in the footer of this letter. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not satisfied with the way the FSA has handled your request for information, you should write within two calendar months of the date of this letter to the Openness Team, and ask for an internal review. They will arrange for the Complaints Coordinator to conduct the review. Their address

is Food Standards Agency, Room 2C Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6NH (email: [Openness.team@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Openness.team@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the FSA. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or through the website at: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

PP.

[Redacted name]

**Head of Information Management**

