

## **Policy – Freedom of information requests**

Someone emails the university asking for information regarding security staff and their policies / procedures. Much of the information they request could be seen to be confidential due to various reasons, and does not concern that person directly. However Freedom Of Information (FOI) laws permit a person to request information held by public organisations and therefore all requests should be managed appropriately.

### **Factors to consider**

- Each university should have a dedicated data protection or freedom of information officer
- Staff should know where to address these requests
- What information can and cannot be passed on could depend on a number of aspects therefore requests should be dealt with by the appropriate individual.
- Any individual has the right to request information from a public institution, it is therefore important that requests are not ignored, and passed to the appropriate individual in a timely fashion. If staff are unaware of what is required of them they should seek out the FOI or data protection officer at their institution
- Some FOI requests can be refused on security considerations

### ***University reflections***

***“Our Freedom Of Information (FOI) officer received an FOI request relating to bomb threats and contacts with national security agencies. As part of her regular meetings with the senior (board level) contact for data and information at the University (the Registrar) she outlined the nature of the request”.***

***“The Registrar noted the security aspects and provided me (the national security liaison point) with the FOI for information. At that point, and given the nature of the national security agencies listed, I contacted my local PREVENT contact to ask for advice on the nature of any reply, and whether there was any interest being raised by other universities. I spoke to the regional HE coordinator and it was raised to Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) who then circulated to all universities FOI contacts”. University Academic Registrar***