



Ref : FOI2024-023 in relation to FOI2024-014

[REDACTED]

8th May 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

Further to our previous correspondence regarding your request for the following information:

please could you provide me with the following:

- i) can you confirm (yes/no) that the AWE has no idea whether the Merlin database has been accessed at any point between 2014 and 2022.*
- ii) can you confirm whether any changes to the Merlin database, other than the software update you mention, were made between 2014 and 2022, ie additions to its contents or declassification.*
- iii) can you confirm how many times each individual accessed the database from 2022 onwards, i.e. Person X 15 times, Person Y 97 times, etc, without identifying the individual concerned.*
- iv) can you confirm the dates and times of each access.*
- v) can you confirm how many of the 283 accesses were for a) FOI requests, b) DSARs, c) press inquiries, d) ministerial queries, e) lawyer requests f) pension applications g) other reasons*
- vi) whether any of the files in the Merlin database relate to correspondence from veterans, legal discussions or correspondence from lawyers, or the initiation of the mortality studies into nuclear test veterans conducted by the National Radiological Protection Board or its successors.*

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). A search for the requested information within the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) has now been completed, and we can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held. We will address each of your points in turn:

- i) No information is held on the access of the Merlin database between 2014 and 2022, under Section 16 this is due to a system software change however AWE is aware that the database was accessed during this period.
- ii) The Merlin database has had no changes to its contents as it is a read-only system, protected from modification.
- ii) Person A – 46 times
Person B – 17 times
Person C – 20 times
Person D – 7 times
Person E – 86 times
Person F – 7 times
Person G – 2 times
Person H – 45 times



Person I – 8 times
Person J – 1 time
Person K -3 times
Person L – 35 times
Person M – 10 times

Under Section 16, advice and assistance, it may be helpful to note that there are currently 8 active users from February 2024, 3 individuals on here have had their accounts deactivated or are 2 admin accounts with no access to the files.

- iv) Regarding dates and times of each access, AWE does hold information, please see the attached.
- v) No information is held on how many times the database was accessed for these reasons under Section 16, advice and assistance, for each occasion of access, the only reason given in the audit trail is 'opening database', AWE are aware that the database is used for SARs and FOIs.
- vi) In relation to the contents of the Merlin database:
- The Merlin database contains some correspondence from veterans. Under Section 16, advice and assistance, this correspondence are war pension claims for compensation submitted to the Veterans Agency which have been copied to AWE.
 - No information can be located with regards to legal discussions or correspondence from lawyers.
 - No information can be located with regards to the initiation of the mortality studies into nuclear test veterans conducted by the National Radiological Protection Board. Under Section 16 advice and assistance, we can confirm that the database does contain copies of the 3 mortality studies conducted in 1988, 1993 and 2003. Under Section 21, information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means, the links to the British Library Catalogue for these documents are included below.

[Mortality and cancer incidence in UK participants in UK atmospheric nuclear weapon tests and experimental programmes. - British Library \(exlibrisgroup.com\)](#)

[Mortality and cancer incidence 1952-1990 in UK participants in the UK atmospheric nuclear weapon tests and programmes. - British Library \(exlibrisgroup.com\)](#)

[Mortality and cancer incidence 1952-1998 in UK participants in the UK atmospheric nuclear weapons tests and experimental programmes - British Library \(exlibrisgroup.com\)](#)

To check the availability please contact The British Library's Reference Services team by emailing bl_ref_services@bl.uk

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications. If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled you have a right to request an internal review within 40 days of receiving this letter, by writing to information.requests@awe.co.uk or our postal address: Information Requests Team, AWE Aldermaston, Reading, RG7 4PR. If you are still unhappy after an



Aldermaston ▪ Reading
Berkshire ▪ RG7 4PR

www.awe.co.uk

internal review has been completed, under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 you have the right to take your complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office. Please note the Commissioner will generally not consider a complaint until you have exhausted AWE's internal complaints process.

Yours sincerely,

AWE Information Requests Team



Date and time	Reason	User
2022-04-07 13:13:58.332 +0100	opening database	Person M
2022-04-07 13:16:35.998 +0100	opening database	Person M
2022-04-07 13:20:06.121 +0100	opening database	Person C
2022-04-13 09:38:46.445 +0100	opening database	Person M
2022-04-13 09:53:36.120 +0100	opening database	Person C
2022-04-13 09:57:10.672 +0100	opening database	Person M
2022-04-13 10:02:32.460 +0100	opening database	Person M
2022-04-13 10:07:43.474 +0100	opening database	Person C
2022-04-13 10:15:38.400 +0100	opening database	Person M
2022-04-13 10:30:34.207 +0100	opening database	Person C
2022-04-13 10:41:59.145 +0100	opening database	Person M
2022-04-14 09:44:58.142 +0100	opening database	Person C
2022-04-19 18:00:06.023 +0100	opening database	Person C
2022-04-20 14:34:17.173 +0100	opening database	Person M
2022-04-20 14:42:50.389 +0100	opening database	Person M
2022-04-20 14:53:01.980 +0100	opening database	Person M
2022-11-02 09:05:01.180 +0000	opening database	Person B
2022-11-02 09:06:23.453 +0000	opening database	Person B
2022-11-02 09:10:31.567 +0000	opening database	Person B
2022-11-03 11:15:29.395 +0000	opening database	Person B
2022-11-04 16:14:46.470 +0000	opening database	Person B
2022-11-07 11:23:24.612 +0000	opening database	Person B
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2022-11-15 12:32:39.956 +0000	opening database	Person B
2022-11-17 08:50:55.951 +0000	opening database	Person E
2022-11-17 08:51:51.711 +0000	opening database	Person F
2022-11-17 09:18:51.467 +0000	opening database	Person I
2022-11-18 11:11:25.429 +0000	opening database	Person B
2022-11-21 14:20:12.777 +0000	opening database	Person H
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2022-11-24 11:03:43.579 +0000	opening database	Person B
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2022-11-30 08:17:37.560 +0000	opening database	Person A
2022-11-30 08:24:28.950 +0000	opening database	Person A
2022-11-30 10:39:57.926 +0000	opening database	Person G
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2022-12-07 08:42:02.649 +0000	opening database	Person A
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2023-01-12 08:21:48.956 +0000	opening database	Person G
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2023-12-04 08:44:00.825 +0000	opening database	Person H
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2023-12-07 14:26:02.912 +0000	opening database	Person E
2023-12-11 10:33:29.722 +0000	opening database	Person H
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2023-12-18 12:14:37.626 +0000	opening database	Person H
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2024-02-27 09:29:12.007 +0000	opening database	Person H
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