

Ref: FOI2026- 018

[REDACTED]

21st May 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

We refer to your request for the following information:

“ A copy of a personal statement submitted to AWE by David Whithorn in March 2026 concerning his discovery of fallout data in the Merlin database”*

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

We can confirm that AWE holds the requested document, however we are withholding it under section 41(1) of the Act, (information provided in confidence).

Section 41 (1) applies where information was obtained from another person and the requested document was supplied in circumstances giving rise to a reasonable expectation of confidence, and it retains the necessary quality of confidence.

Section 41 is an absolute exemption and is therefore not subject to the public interest test under the Act. Nevertheless, we have considered whether the public interest in releasing this requested information, and we do not consider that it would justify disclosure in this case.

In accordance with our duty under section 16 of the Act, we have considered whether it would be possible to provide any information in a redacted or alternative form. However, due to the nature of the information requested and that the material was provided in confidence by Mr Whithorn, we consider that it is not reasonably practicable to redact, extract or provide you with an alternative form of the information you are seeking without disclosing content that would engage section 41(1).

The Upper Tribunal has confirmed that access rights apply to information held by a public authority in its own capacity, and do not create a universal right of access to all information merely because it exists or may be on an authority's systems. This may help you frame a request that targets material AWE holds for its organisational purposes.

If your underlying interest is the environmental monitoring data, please note that AWE is already working on releasing information to The National Archive on this subject and there is also a ministerial commitment to maximum transparency and reporting back to Parliament¹.

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.

¹ [Nuclear Test Veterans - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

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 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