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Our ref 13/0930
Your ref

Email: owen.boswarva@gmail.com

2nd August 2013

Dear Mr Boswarva

Thank you for your email of 24 July 2013 where you requested the following information:-

"This is a Freedom of Information request for some information related to the Social Mobility Transparency Board (sometimes referred to as the Social Mobility Sector Transparency Board).

I understand that this Board is cross-departmental but that secretariat services are provided by BIS. I also understand that the Board met for the first time in October 2012 and that there has been one or more subsequent meetings.

I would be grateful for the following information:

1. A list of the names of the Board members, along with their organisations or affiliations and any formal declarations of interest.
2. In particular, the names of any non-executive members of the Board and any board member appointed specifically as a privacy expert.
3. The dates of any meetings held by the Board.
4. A copy of any minutes or agendas of those meetings held by BIS, as well as any action logs, presentations, terms of reference, or other attachments prepared and/or circulated with those agendas or minutes".

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'), you have the right to:

- know whether we hold the information you require
- be provided with that information (subject to any exemptions under the Act which may apply).

For ease of reference, I will take your questions in the order in which you make them.

Question 1

Members of the board are:-

- David Willetts MP (Minister of State for Universities and Science, BIS), David Laws MP (Minister of State for Schools, DfE), Matthew Hancock MP (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills, DfE and BIS), David Gauke MP (Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury),
- current lead officials from; BIS (John O'Reilly, Secretariat Heather Brown, Special Advisor Nick Hillman), DfE (Jude Hillary, Tim Leunig – Tim has also remained a member of faculty at LSE),

HMRC (Lucinda Bell, Mike Hawkins), Cabinet Office (Ed Parkes) and Deputy Prime Minister's office (Charlotte Alldritt),

- Paul Boyle (ESRC), background information is available in the public domain (eg <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/governance/directors/ceo.aspx>).
- Dr Lee Elliott-Major (The Sutton Trust), background information is available in the public domain (eg <http://www.suttontrust.com/news/blog/bloggers/lee-elliott-major/>).
- Professor John Goldthorpe (University of Oxford), background information can be found in the public domain eg <http://www.spi.ox.ac.uk/staff/research/profile/goldthorpe.html>.
- Professor Anna Vignoles (University of Cambridge), background information can be found in the public domain eg <http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/people/staff/vignoles/>.

Question 2

There are no non-executive board members. No board member is specifically appointed as a privacy expert, however officials and members of the group have experience of data issues and considerations when sharing data.

Question 3

The Social Mobility Transparency Board has met three times to date: October 2nd 2012; December 18th 2012; and, May 21st 2013.

Question 4

A copy of the information which can be disclosed in response to this question is enclosed. The remainder of the information is exempt under section 35 (Formulation of Government Policy) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and is therefore withheld. In reaching our decision, we have considered whether the public interest is best served by disclosing or releasing the information in question.

We are conscious that greater transparency makes government more accountable to the public for its decision making and can further have the effect of increasing confidence and knowledge in the way that government works. This may have the additional effect of helping to make the policy process become more effective as transparency increases. We have considered the arguments in favour of disclosure, that good government depends on good decision-making and that this needs to be based on the best advice available.

It is important to the effectiveness of the board that members are able to present candid advice that deals with the issues considered. If board papers were made public, discussions, frankness and policy development would inevitably be inhibited because of the risk of disclosure and departments would be prevented from decision making based on the fullest understanding and perspectives on the issues involved. If the quality of those exchanges or the discussion of the issues they deal with is hampered, this will in turn damage the Government's ability to take decisions.

In this case we have concluded that the public interest is not served by disclosing the information and it has accordingly been withheld.

Appeals Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to Security & Information Rights Unit (FOI.Requests@bis.gsi.gov.uk).

Security & Information Rights Unit
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
1 Victoria Street
London, SW1H 0ET

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

BIS / Higher Education Directorate

Social Mobility Transparency Board

Terms of Reference and Membership

Reporting to:	Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP, Deputy Prime Minister
Chaired by:	Rt Hon David Willets MP, Minister for Universities and Science
Permanent Members:	Ministers from relevant departments A Senior Official from relevant Departments A relevant No. 10 official A relevant official from the Deputy Prime Minister's Office A member of the Cabinet Office Transparency team External representatives from data user communities

Aim

To match and share a much wider range of data on progression through education and into the labour market, to underpin research, policies and initiatives outside government to improve social mobility.

The Board will

- act as an effective challenge body to ensure that where possible relevant datasets are linked and shared
- provide a focal point for bringing Transparency to the cross-government commitment to improve social mobility.
- work to achieve the benefits of transparency for end-users of public services, for public sector professionals and for businesses.
- assist relevant Departments in achieving their wider objectives to create social and economic value through the release of open data and to facilitate exciting new user-focused services and applications.

Scope

The Board will encourage closer collaboration between departments and other relevant organisations. The initial focus will be on progression so that it is possible to track mobility and educational outcomes, but the group may also consider data transparency on wider issues related to social mobility.

Governance

The Board will meet on a biannual basis, with sub-group meetings in between formal sessions as required.

Measuring Success

Key success measures:

- That relevant identified key datasets are linked and shared to support the social mobility agenda.

- Data shared takes account of data user needs (including information, advice and guidance) as much as possible and mechanisms are in place to capture and reflect upon user feedback.
- Newly linked and/or shared data is used to improve the evidence base to support the social mobility agenda.
- New data is made available in a way that can be used to increase/improve user-focused applications or services including information advice and guidance.

Review arrangements

The Board will review its progress twice annually. It will report progress against its milestones each annum to both the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Cabinet Office and the Informal Ministerial Group on Social Mobility. In addition, the Board will provide a written statement to the same parties in the interim.