



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

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Freedom of Information request reference number: 7249.1

Date of response: 16 March 2023

Request:

Can I formally request a copy of the report/document that was produced following the review of People Services that was conducted by Dr Jenny Simnett. This review commenced in December 2022 and I believe that a report was produced either January/February 2023.

Response:

I can confirm the LFB hold a copy of the report 'An Independent Review of People Services at The London Fire Brigade, By Dr Jenny Simnett, 31 January 2023'

However, I consider the release of a full copy of the 'An Independent Review of People Services at The London Fire Brigade' report exempt from disclosure under the FOI act through a combination of [section 40 – personal information](#) and [section 38\(1\)a – Health and safety](#).

The report narrative frequently identifies specific individuals through the description of their roles at the LFB. If this information were redacted, it would be difficult to provide you any meaningful information from the full report (as large parts would need to be redacted under [section 40 – personal information](#)).

Along with individuals being identified, the report makes reference to the work of small teams within the People Services function. Individuals within those teams will know that their team and the work of their teams are being referenced and discussed. The findings of Dr Simnett are being considered by the Brigade as are her recommendations. To disclose those (and the report) at this time, without considering which recommendations the London Fire Commissioner will take forward and/or how risks that staff in People Services may feel unnecessarily anxious, uncertain or stressed. Those teams are already under scrutiny and stress following the publication of the [Independent Culture Review](#) and to release the unconsidered report of Dr Simnett would likely add to that anxiety and stress. For that reason, the discussion and narrative of the report is also being withheld on the basis that its disclosure to the public would endanger the health and safety of any individual in the teams that are discussed.

[Section 38](#) is not an absolute exemption; rather it is subject to a public interest test. There is a public interest in knowing and understanding the effective function of the LFB and our ability to scrutinise and review our working practices (especially in light of recommendations published in the [Independent Culture Review](#)).

However, disclosing the details of the job roles of the staff involved would also reveal their identities. As mentioned above, the early release of the report could expose the identifiable staff to unacceptable levels of scrutiny and, in turn, tangible stress before full consideration has been given to the report's findings. This would prejudice our ability to protect their mental and physical health and safety at work. It is our view that the public interest in maintaining the [Section 38](#) exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The London Fire Commissioner does recognise that there is interest in the work of Dr Simnett and a formalised and depersonalised version of the report's findings are being prepared and will be made available for general release. I will open a new FOI request for you (FOIA 7249.2) so that you will be sent a copy of that report when available.

We have dealt with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. For more information about this process please see the guidance we publish about making a request [on our website](#).