



**FIRST-TIER TRIBUNAL  
GENERAL REGULATORY CHAMBER  
Information Rights**

**Tribunal Reference:** EA/2013/0169  
**Appellant:** Mrs NT Watson  
**Respondent:** The Information Commissioner  
**Judge:** NJ Warren

**DECISION NOTICE**

1. Mrs Watson has a long standing grievance with a trade union. On two occasions over the years she says she has approached MPs for help with it only to be told that there was an agreement in place barring MPs from assisting constituents who wanted to bring their trade union to account.
2. Earlier this year she asked the House of Commons for a copy of the agreement, rule or policy or whatever it may be under the Freedom of Information Act. The House of Commons told her that they did not hold the requested information. She complained unsuccessfully to the Information Commissioner (ICO) and now appeals to the Tribunal against the ICO decision. The ICO has applied for the appeal to be struck out.
3. The ICO points out that he checked with the House of Commons who confirmed that enquiries had been made with the Office of the Chief Executive, the Department of Human Resources and Change, the Personnel Advisory Service and the Office of the Parliamentary Commission for Standards. No one was aware of the existence of any such agreement.
4. The Tribunal, as well as inviting Mrs Watson to comment on the strike out application, wrote to her asking her to explain whether she believed the House of Commons did hold the information and if so, what the grounds were for her belief. She has replied to say that she herself considers that the ICO's conclusion is correct and that no such agreement exists.
5. In these circumstances it seems to me inevitable that if this appeal went to a hearing the Tribunal would uphold the ICO's decision.
6. When asked what result she expects from these proceedings, Mrs Watson says that she wants MPs and Trade Unions to be brought within the Parliamentary

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Commission for Standards and the Parliamentary Ombudsman – although she accepts that this is not within the powers of the Tribunal.

7. She also says that she wants an apology because “someone in the HoC has put my word in doubt and the IC has condoned this”. I confess that I do not find this entirely clear but I am satisfied that it is well outside the scope of the Tribunal’s powers under FOIA.
8. I am satisfied that it would be an injustice to the ICO to allow this appeal to proceed. Nor would it do any favours to Mrs Watson. The right thing to do is to bring it to an end now and I therefore strike it out because it has no reasonable prospect of success.

**NJ Warren**

**Chamber President**

**Dated 7 October 2013**