Dear Margot,

Information Commissioner's Powers
I have corresponded with the Information Commissioner, Elizabeth Denham, after I was concerned to hear her tell the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee in November that the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) does not have the power to compel individuals to interview. In her reply, Ms Denham confirmed that the ICO does indeed lack this power.

Several individuals that the ICO requested to submit to voluntary interviews, notably as part of the Cambridge Analytica investigation, refused. If the ICO is to uphold information rights in the public interest, it must have the power to investigate and pursue serious allegations relating to civil breaches, contraventions and criminal offences under the legislation. This includes being able to compel those individuals involved in the case to interview.

Please you could set out in your reply to me how your Department intends to address this deficiency in the Data Protection Act 2018? I would be grateful if you could reply to me by Tuesday 23 April. I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, Damian Collins MP, for information.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP
Chair