



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

11 January 2022

Dear Ms Hart

Our ref: FOI2021/23265

Thank you for your email of 8 December in which you make a request for information about allegations of gatherings in No 10 Downing Street. Your request, which is attached in the Annex, has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

An investigation is being undertaken, led by the Second Permanent Secretary at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to establish the facts and report back as soon as possible.

The terms of reference have been published, and the findings will be made public. This information therefore engages Section 22 of the Act (*information intended for future publication*).

Section 22 is a qualified exemption, and requires the public authority to consider where the balance of public interest falls between disclosure and exemption.

There is a general interest in a public authority providing any information that it holds within the scope of an Freedom of Information Act as quickly as possible. That needs to be balanced with the public interest in ensuring that, in these particular circumstance where an official investigation has been established, the investigations are able to establish the facts and present the findings as a whole.

It is not in the public interest to place information into the public domain prematurely before those investigations have been completed and the findings published.

Therefore the balance of public interest in this instance favours withholding any potential information related to these investigations at this stage.

Yours sincerely

NS Howard

NICHOLAS HOWARD

Ms Amanda Hart

Annex

Please kindly provide the dates and times of all Christmas gatherings at 10 Downing Street during the months of November and December of 2020.



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LONDON SW1A 2AA

If you are unhappy with the level of service you have received from this office in relation to any aspect of your request, you may ask for an internal review.

You should contact:

Tarley Smith
Head of Freedom of Information
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

Email: foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF