



Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Freedom of Information Team
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
4th Floor
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ
E: foi@dcms.gov.uk
Tel: 020 7211 6111
www.gov.uk/dcms

Max Colbert
request-815875-9a0e5237@whatdotheyknow.com

FOI2022/02234

17 May 2022

Dear Max Colbert,

Thank you for your correspondence of 9 February, in which you made the following request for information:

Thank you for your response, you'll understand I can't take the information that there were no parties "in DCMS" on face value, given the circumstances that have resulted in "partygate" becoming a national scandal were in the first instance lied about by those involved. There could have been a party that was organised over DCMS Emails, but didn't take place in the offices, if that makes sense.

However, I'm happy to refine my request to include only Emails in which the following people were tagged:

***Nigel Huddleston
Matt Warman
Caroline Dinengage
John Whittingdale
Sarah Healey
Polly Payne
Jacinda Humphrey
Hermant Patel
Susannah Storey
Sam Lister***

Original request:

I'm writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) to ask that you disclose emails sent between 3 or more people copied in between the 15th - 24th December,...containing the following words: "party/ies", "santa", "christmas", "wine", "drink/s", "gathering", or "quiz".

Firstly, we apologise for the delay in providing a response. We regret that we are unable to respond to your request because it exceeds the cost limit set out by the Act. Section 12 of



the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

We still consider your request to be over the statutory limit because the volume of emails captured by our initial searches for the specified keywords returns hundreds of emails. In particular, the keyword "christmas" appears numerous times during this timeframe - such as colleagues wishing a "Merry Christmas" during the festive period. Therefore, it would not be possible for us to collate and go through all of these emails. I must also reiterate that it is not possible to ascertain whether the emails have been sent to 3 or more people as the search tool does not have this function.

In order that you can submit a request that does not breach the cost limit set, you may like to further limit the search timescale and also further specify people within the department from whom you'd like to see emails from. Given the rationale provided above, you may also like to make a more specific request with regards to the key terms to be searched as all of the key terms you have used bring up a large volume of results, and many are very widely used terms during the period in a manner of situations. It would also be helpful to clarify the definition of "tagged" for any people specified in the search.

Yours sincerely,

Freedom of Information Team
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

Complaints and comments

As is customary in our replies, I should explain that if you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our response to your request for information, and/or wish to appeal against information being withheld from you, please send full details within two calendar months of the date of this response to: foi@dcms.gov.uk. You have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. Please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning an investigation.