



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Central FOI Unit
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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Ms Jenna Corderoy
request-677089-2cea087c@whatdotheyknow.com

12 August 2020

Dear Ms Jenna Corderoy

Your Freedom Of Information Request: FOI2020/14812

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 14th July. In your request you asked for;

I understand that the FOI round robin list is issued daily to Whitehall departments, and that it comprises of FOI requests across departments that either (a) are identical requests that have been sent to multiple departments or (b) are asking about sensitive subjects that have been reported to the Cabinet Office Clearing House. Once a request is added to the list, other government departments who receive the same request also notify Clearing House.

In light of this, I would like to request the following information:

- (1) What criteria does the department use - or refer to - when it flags requests to the round robin list? Please provide a copy of the criteria, or guidelines.
- (2) What criteria does the department use - or refer to - when it flags requests to the Cabinet Office Clearing House? Please provide a copy of the criteria, or guidelines.
- (3) Does the department have a list of sensitive subjects which prompt requests being flagged to the Cabinet Office Clearing House? Please disclose it if it exists.
- (4) For the past two weeks, please provide a copy of all requests that have been sent to the Cabinet Office Clearing House by this department (please redact requesters' names).
- (5) For the past two weeks, please provide a copy of round robin lists received by the department (please redact requesters' names).

I would like to remind the department that in Decision Notice FS50841228, the ICO ruled that the Cabinet Office had to release past round robin lists.

I would like to receive this information in an electronic format. If you feel that a substantive response to this request is not possible within a reasonable time frame, I would be grateful if you could contact me and provide assistance as to how I can refine the request. If you need any clarification, please contact me. I look forward to receiving a response in 20 working days. Many thanks.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does hold information falling within the terms of your request.

The FOI Act obliges us to respond to requests promptly, and in any case no later than 20 working days after receiving your request. However, when a qualified exemption applies to the information and the public interest test is engaged, the Act allows the time for response to be longer than 20 working days, and a full response must be provided within such time as is reasonable in all circumstances of the case. We do, of course, aim to make all decisions within 20 working days, including in cases where we need to consider where the public interest lies in respect of a request for exempt information. In this case, however, we have not yet reached a decision on where the balance of the public interest lies.

In your case we estimate that it will take an additional 20 days to take a decision on where the balance of the public interest lies. Therefore, we plan to let you have a response by 8th September. If it appears that it will take longer than this to reach a conclusion, we will keep you informed.

The specific exemption which applies in relation to your request is: Section 24 – National Security.

Please contact us at foi-dpa.pmcs@fco.gov.uk if you have any queries about this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Central FOI Unit



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