



Home Office

Digital, Data and Technology
Enterprise Services
Lunar House
Croydon
CR9 2BY
www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Daniel Leonard
Via email to:
request-719524-31787df7@whatdotheyknow.com

09 February 2021

Dear Daniel Leonard,

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request (Our Reference 62200)

Thank you for your email of 20 January 2021, in which you ask for information on the use of telephony systems and communication tools used by the General Register Office.

A full copy of your request can be found in **Annex A**. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

I can confirm that we hold this information and you will find the response set out in bold within **Annex A**.

Some information is exempt under section 43(2) (commercial interests) of the FOI Act. This states information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

Section 43(2) of the Act is a qualified exemption and requires consideration of the public interest test. Arguments for and against disclosure in terms of the public interest, with the reasons for our conclusion, are set out in **Annex B**.

Additionally, some information is exempt under section 40(2) (personal information), which is an absolute exemption and applies to personal data if disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles. Section 40(2) does not require the consideration of the public interest test.

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk, quoting reference **62200**. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request would be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you were to remain dissatisfied after an internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the FOIA.

Yours sincerely,

Home Office Enterprise Services

Email foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk

Annex A

From: Daniel Leonard <request-719524-31787df7@whatdotheyknow.com>

Sent: 20 January 2021 15:46

To: FOI <FOI@hmpo.gov.uk>

Subject: Freedom of Information request GQ - Communications & Services

Dear General Register Office,

Please confirm the manufacturer of your telephony system(s) that are currently in place?

The GRO's core telephony system (Skype for Business) is provided by the Home Office and is manufactured by Microsoft

When was the installation date of your telephony equipment?

Installation for the GRO completed in November 2020

Who maintains your telephony system(s)?

Lumen Technologies LTD.

Please confirm value of the initial project?

Exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) (commercial interests) of the FOI Act.

Please confirm value of annual support/maintenance services (in £)?

Exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) (commercial interests) of the FOI Act.

Does your annual maintenance service include moves, adds and changes? And if not what is the annual cost of moves, adds & changes?

Exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) (commercial interests) of the FOI Act.

When is your contract renewal date?

September 2024

Do you use Unified Communications or Collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams/ Slack/ Cisco/Avaya/Mitel/ Zoom? If yes, please list all tools you are currently using?

Skype for Business and Microsoft Teams

Please confirm the manufacturer of your Contact centre system(s) that are currently in place?

Genesys

When was the installation date of your contact centre infrastructure?

May 2008

Who maintains your contact centre system(s)?

Home Office Digital Data and Technology

Please confirm value of the initial project?

Exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) (commercial interests) of the FOI Act.

Please confirm value of annual support/maintenance services (in £)?

Exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) (commercial interests) of the FOI Act.

How many contact centre employees/agents do you have?

128 concurrent licences

Do agents work from home? Or just your offices?

GRO agents utilise Genesys software from within the office.

When is your contract renewal date?

April 2021

Do you use a CRM in the contact centre? What platform is used?

Oracle E-business suite

Do you use a knowledge base / knowledge management platform? What platform is used?

GRO does not use a knowledge base / knowledge management platform.

Who currently provides your calls and lines?

BT

What is your current annual spend on calls and lines?

Exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) (commercial interests) of the FOI Act.

When is your contract renewal date?

April 2021

Who provides your wide area network? How many sites are connected?

GRO consists of one site but utilises the Home Office Poise network

How many employees do you have overall within your organisation?

GRO has 700 employees

Can you provide contact details for your procurement lead / category manager for these services?

The information requested is exempt under section 40(2) (personal information), which is an absolute exemption and applies to personal data if disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles. Section 40(2) does not require the consideration of the public interest test.

Can you provide names and contact details for the following people within your organisation?

CIO / IT Director

The information requested is exempt under section 40(2) (personal information), which is an absolute exemption and applies to personal data if disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles. Section 40(2) does not require the consideration of the public interest test.

Head of IT

The information requested is exempt under section 40(2) (personal information), which is an absolute exemption and applies to personal data if disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles. Section 40(2) does not require the consideration of the public interest test.

Head of Digital Transformation

The information requested is exempt under section 40(2) (personal information), which is an absolute exemption and applies to personal data if disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles. Section 40(2) does not require the consideration of the public interest test.

Head of Customer services

The information requested is exempt under section 40(2) (personal information), which is an absolute exemption and applies to personal data if disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles. Section 40(2) does not require the consideration of the public interest test.

Yours faithfully,

Daniel Leonard

Annex B – Public interest test

Freedom of Information request from Daniel Leonard (reference 62200)

Information requested

If this is a new contract or a new supplier, please can you provide me with a short list of suppliers that bid on this service/support contract?

Response

Section 43(2) of the Act

The Home Office considers information you have requested to be exempt from disclosure on the grounds that release would prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it). The information is thereby withheld under the exemption at section 43(2). This exemption is defined in the Act as follows:

43(2) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

Public interest test in relation to sections 43(2)

Some of the exemptions in the FOI Act, referred to as 'qualified exemptions', are subject to a public interest test (PIT). This test is used to balance the public interest test in disclosure against the public interest in maintaining the exemption. We must carry out a PIT where we are considering using any of the qualified exemptions in response to a request for information.

The 'public interest' is not the same as what interests the public. In carrying out a PIT we consider the greater good or benefit to the community as a whole if the information is released or not. Transparency and the 'right to know' must be balanced against the need to enable effective government and to serve the best interests of the public.

The FOI Act is 'applicant blind'. This means that we cannot, and do not, ask about the motives of anyone who asks for information. In providing a response to one person, we are expressing a willingness to provide the same response to anyone, including those who might represent a threat to the UK.

Considerations in favour of disclosing the information

There is a public interest in disclosure to the extent that this would help ensure transparency in the Home Office's use of public funds and in particular to maintain the department's accountability to taxpayers. Disclosure of this information would also enable the public to assess if the Home Office is getting best value for money for its contracts with private providers and partner agencies.

Considerations in favour of maintaining the exemption

There is a public interest in Government departments and agencies being able to secure contracts that represent value for money and anything that would undermine this is not in the public interest. Value for money can best be obtained where there is a healthy competitive environment, coupled with the protection of the Government's commercial relationship with industry.

Release of the withheld information would provide competitors with information, not available to them by any other means, about current service providers. This would create an unfair advantage resulting in a prejudice to the commercial interests of the company concerned. Disclosure would also prejudice the Home Office's commercial interests by damaging commercial relationships with contractors and service providers. The risks: Companies would be discouraged from dealing with the public sector, fearing disclosure of information that may damage them commercially; or Companies would withhold information where possible, making the choice of the best contractor more uncertain as it would be based on limited censored data.

Conclusion

We conclude that the balance of the public interest lies in withholding the information.

Date 09 February 2021