



Home Office

Performance, Assurance  
and Governance  
Directorate  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

020 7035 4848  
(switchboard)

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Mr Guy Basnett  
Via email to: [request-533408-  
d2b5f348@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-533408-d2b5f348@whatdotheyknow.com)

27 November 2018

Dear Mr Basnett

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request (Our Reference 51147)**

Thank you for your email of 18 November 2018, in which you ask for copies of all emails held by the Department which include Theresa May in any capacity and contain the phrase "*hostile environment*". A full copy of your request can be found in the attached Annex. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We have considered your request and we judge that it engages the exemption at section 14(1) of the Act.

Section 14(1) of the Act provides that the Home Office is not obliged to comply with a request for information which it considers to be vexatious. We have reached this conclusion because your request adopts a 'scattergun' approach and because responding to it would impose a disproportionate burden on the department. We would need to contact a large proportion of staff to ask them to conduct key word searches on their emails and archived records that date back to the time frame you have specified. We would also need to try to obtain and search emails from staff that may have held the requested information, but no longer work within the Home Office (the emails themselves should still be held). Once any emails had been located via the key word search, they would then need to be examined individually to check whether it was in scope of the request. The Department would therefore need to devote a very significant and in our view disproportionate level of time and resources in order to provide the information which you have requested, or even to find out whether it exists.

In judging your request as vexatious we have followed the Information Commissioner's guidance on dealing with vexatious requests, which is available on the Commissioner's website at: <https://ico.org.uk/media/for-organisations/documents/1198/dealing-with-vexatious-requests.pdf>.

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.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:foirequests@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk), quoting reference **51147**. 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

**S Mason**

**Information Rights Team**

Switchboard 020 7035 4848

Email [foirequests@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:foirequests@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Annex – FOI request**

Dear Home Office,

Please provide copies of all emails including Theresa May (in any capacity, for example but not limited to sender, recipient, named in CC, named in BCC, etc) sent between the six months of 1 July 2014 and 31 December 2014 that contain the phrase "hostile environment" in either the subject, body of the message, attachment name, or contents of the attachment.

If my request is refused, either in whole or in part, I ask that you make specific reference to exemptions under the FOIA. Please let me know if you require any more information.

Yours faithfully,

Guy Basnett