



Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Freedom of Information Team
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
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Joseph Lloyd
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FOI2022/09681
12 September 2022

Dear Joseph Lloyd,

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 July, in which you made the following request for information:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 I wish to see the following:

- 1) Full copies of all minutes, agendas, action logs and briefing materials for the meeting between Nadine Dorries and Robbie Gibb held on 02/03/2022.***
- 2) Full copies of all minutes, agendas, action logs and briefing materials for the meeting between Nadine Dorries, Tim Davie and Richard Sharpe held on 12/01/2022.***
- 3) Full copies of all minutes, agendas, action logs and briefing materials for the meeting between Nadine Dorries, Dawn Airey and Alex Mahon held on 16/03/2022.***

Please also include any other materials that were handed out or received during the meetings, such as presentations, reports, etc..

We have dealt with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). I can confirm that the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) does have some information within scope of your request.

- 1) Full copies of all minutes, agendas, action logs and briefing materials for the meeting between Nadine Dorries and Robbie Gibb held on 02/03/2022.***

The department holds no information in regards to this question.

- 2) Full copies of all minutes, agendas, action logs and briefing materials for the meeting between Nadine Dorries, Tim Davie and Richard Sharpe held on 12/01/2022.***

- 3) Full copies of all minutes, agendas, action logs and briefing materials for the meeting between Nadine Dorries, Dawn Airey and Alex Mahon held on 16/03/2022.***

In response to questions 2 and 3 of your request we do have information in scope of your request. However, we consider the information to be exempt from release under section 36(2)(b)(i) of the Act. Section 36(2)(b)(i) considers information exempt, subject to the public interest test, if the release of the information '*(b)would, or would be likely to, inhibit— (i)the free and frank provision of advice*'. This is a 'qualified' exemption and the department is obliged to consider the public interest arguments for the information we hold. The factors we have considered are set out below.

In favour of the release of the information we considered the general, inherent, public interest in governmental transparency. Transparency creates accountability and increases trust.

However, in favour of applying the exemption we considered the strong public interest in protecting the 'safe space' around officials where they can provide candid briefing to ministers and other senior officials free from the fear of the release of their advice. In particular, we consider release of the information would likely to impact on this 'safe space' and would be likely to dissuade officials from providing thorough, free and frank advice to ministers and senior officials of fear of their advice being released. If officials are concerned that their briefings to ministers and senior officials will be released, they may less willing to provide thorough detailed information in briefings. This may leave the ministers and senior officials unprepared for meetings, reducing their effectiveness

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: xxx@xxxx.xxx.xx. 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.