



HM Revenue & Customs

Mel

By email: request-1208658-
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Information Rights Unit
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Date: 9 December 2024
Our ref: FOI2024/235553

Dear Mel

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Thank you for your request, which was received on 29 November, for the following information:

“All emails please for the last no. of months available in which BBC employees used the racist anti-white term "white privilege " with or without a hyphen. Please consider this request to be confined to emails between racist HMRC employees.

That should read in which all HMRC employees.”

Our Response

To qualify as a valid submission under the FOIA, a request must fulfil the criteria set out in [Section 8](#) of the Act, which states the following:

“Request for information

(1) In this Act any reference to a ‘request for information’ is a reference to such a request which—

- (a) is in writing,
- (b) states the name of the applicant and an address for correspondence, and
- (c) describes the information requested.”

[Guidance from the Information Commissioner’s Office \(ICO\)](#) explains that requesters must provide a ‘real name’ that allows them to be identified:

“A requester whose name is Joseph Bloggs could call themselves ‘Joe Bloggs’, ‘Joey Bloggs’, ‘J Bloggs’ or ‘Mr Bloggs’. However, they could not just use ‘Joseph’, ‘Joe’, ‘Joey’ or ‘J.B.’ as this may not be sufficient to identify the requester. If the requester has used a pseudonym, then their request is invalid.”

Your request is not valid under the Act as it does not include a ‘real name’ as required by section 8(1)(b).

If you need extra support, for example if you have a disability, a mental health condition, or do not speak English/Welsh, go to www.gov.uk and search for ‘get help from HMRC’.

Text Relay service prefix number – 18001 OFFICIAL

If you wish to resubmit your request using a valid name, we will also require clarification before we are able to provide any information.

You have requested all emails from BBC employees which contain a specific term, which we would not hold unless they were emails sent to HMRC. You have then stated that your request should be restricted to emails between HMRC employees only. It is not clear from your request whether you are requesting emails sent by the BBC to HMRC, or emails sent between HMRC employees, or whether the BBC has been mentioned in error. It is also unclear if you are requesting information for a set number of months, or for all emails which are currently held.

If you are able to clarify your request, we may be able to provide more information. However, please note that we do not hold a central record of phrases used in our staffs' emails. To obtain all emails containing a specific phrase would require us to contact every member of staff. This would not be possible within the cost limits of a FOIA response, which in the case of HMRC is £600, or 24 hours charged at £25 per hour. More information on this can be found [here](#).

To refine your request in a way that may be answerable within the cost limit, you may wish to consider limiting the time period for your request and the scope of staff members whose emails would need to be checked.

Please submit your clarified request (quoting the FOI reference number above) by emailing foi.request@hmrc.gov.uk or by writing to the address at the top of this letter.

If, after clarifying your request, you are not content with our freedom of information response, you can ask us to carry out an internal review. You also retain the right to [complain to the Information Commissioner](#).

Yours sincerely,

HM Revenue and Customs