

**REASONS FOR NOT PROVIDING INFORMATION**

An exemption under section s.38(1) of FOISA applies to some of the information you have requested. This is because it is personal data of a third party, i.e. their names and contact details, and disclosing it would contravene the data protection principles set out in Article 5(1) of the General Data Protection Regulation and in section 34(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

This exemption is not subject to the 'public interest test', so we are not required to consider if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption.

An exemption applies, subject to the public interest test under section 28 of FOISA to a small amount of the information you have requested. This section exempts information where disclosure would be likely to prejudice substantially relations between any administration in the United Kingdom and any other such administration.

This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is some public interest in release on the basis of open and transparent government. However, this is outweighed by the public interest in maintaining and promoting sharing of information which is necessary for the effective conduct of public affairs.

Exemptions apply, subject to the public interest test, under sections 30(b)(i) (free and frank provision of advice), 30(b)(ii) (free and frank exchange of views) and 30(c) (prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs) of FOISA to some of the information you have requested. These sections exempt information where disclosure would be likely to substantially inhibit the free and frank provision of advice and exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation, or be likely to substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.

These exemptions are subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption. We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exemption. We recognise that there is some public interest in release on the basis of open and transparent government. We also recognise that there is public interest in how people seeking asylum in the UK have been accommodated during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, this is outweighed by the public interest in allowing a protected space for full and frank discussions between officials and with external stakeholders. Disclosure of some of the information would breach reasonable expectations from relevant third parties that free and frank discussions can take place in such a space. The greater public interest lies in allowing a space for the sharing of information and exchange of views.