

REASONS FOR NOT PROVIDING INFORMATION

An exemption applies

First of all, I have applied s.38 (1) (b) of FOISA (personal information) to some of the information requested. As the information is personal data of junior staff, disclosure would contravene the data protection principles 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. Where third party information such as email addresses or names of some individuals are included in the text they have been redacted.

An exemption under section s.27(1) of FOISA applies to some of the information you have requested. This relates to information that is set to be published in the near future, and so has been redacted in order to allow it to be published in full as planned. 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.

An exemption under section 30(b)(i& ii) of FOISA (free and frank exchange of views as well as free and frank provision of advice) applies to some of the information you have requested. This exemption applies because disclosure would, or would be likely to, inhibit substantially the free and frank exchange of views. This recognises the need for officials to have a private space in which to conduct frank discussion. This exemption is subject to the 'public interest test'. 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 as part of open, transparent and accountable government, and to inform public debate. However, this is outweighed by the public interest in allowing a private space within which officials can have full and frank discussions. Disclosure of the content of such discussions of the UK Government's cut to Universal Credit could substantially inhibit the free and frank discussion in the future, particularly as these discussions related to a sensitive and complex issue.