

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 02 March 2023 18:01

**To:** [redacted]

**Subject:** RE: FOI relating to Mr. Yousaf and equal marriage votes in 2014

Hi [redacted]

Given there has been a few changes in administrations/Ministers since then, and MPO has a policy of only holding correspondence for 3 months then anything held by MPO would have been deleted or stored on ERDM. The wording below is what we frequently use responding to FOI requests. The main policy or guidance would have been the Ministerial Code, and the preferences set out for official support at meetings. The expectation would have been that policy colleagues attended the meeting to support the Minister, take a note and everything saved on ERDM.

However, there are examples where a Minister may attend a meeting on their own and discuss Government business, this should then be fed back to their PO and passed on to officials to store a record. As recent examples played out in Parliament and the media have highlighted this may not have always been the case.

*“The Scottish Government does not have the information you have asked for because private offices only hold correspondence for 3 months. It may be helpful to explain that Ministerial Mailboxes are primarily transactional – managing incoming and outgoing emails. The number of items and size (in GBs) of Ministerial mailboxes are monitored, and retaining emails for a maximum of three months is a key part of ensuring mailbox size remains below the level where the number of items and size of box starts to impact on mailbox functionality. Any emails and documents which form part of the official record are filed in the Scottish Government electronic Records Management System (eRDM).”*

Please let me know if you need any further information.

[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 01 March 2023 17:00

**To:** [redacted]

**Subject:** RE: FOI relating to Mr. Yousaf and equal marriage votes in 2014

Hi [redacted] and [redacted],

Thanks for bringing this to our attention. I've expanded the copy list by adding some more news colleagues for awareness and [redacted].

As was suggested in the original email, it looks like there's the potential for this to become a records management issue. I've copied some previously issued lines below, but these would only be a starter.

**[redacted]** – are you able to provide any insight at this stage into what sort of records should've been kept regarding this engagement? Appreciate policies might've changed considerably since 2014.

Thanks,

**[redacted]**

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“Our records management policy states that information and records should be retained as long as they are required to support the Scottish Government in its business requirements and legal obligations.”

**From:** **[redacted]**

**Sent:** 01 March 2023 13:00

**To:** **[redacted]**

**Subject:** RE: FOI relating to Mr. Yousaf and equal marriage votes in 2014

Hi **[redacted]**

Thanks for copying me in here. I will attempt another extensive search shortly but I can confirm I am also unable to find any papers on these meetings so far. Copying in **[redacted]**, who asked me separately for updates on these cases.

Thanks

**[redacted]**

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 08 March 2023 10:32  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** FOI trawl

Hi [redacted]

Here are the searches I have conducted for the FOIs. As per discussion, nothing new from these.

Meeting: Filter, date created: 2013 and 2014

Minister for External Affairs and International Development Pakistan  
Minister for External Affairs and International Development Pakistani  
Minister for External Affairs and International Development Consul General  
Minister for External Affairs and International Development Consulate  
EAID Pakistan  
EAID Pakistani  
EAID Consul General  
EAID Consulate  
Yousaf Pakistan  
Yousaf Pakistani  
Yousaf Consul General  
Yousaf Consulate

Asghar

Minister for External Affairs and International Development Asghar  
Minister for External Affairs and International Development Asghar  
Minister for External Affairs and International Development Asghar  
Minister for External Affairs and International Development Asghar  
EAID Asghar  
EAID Asghar  
EAID Asghar  
EAID Asghar  
Yousaf Asghar  
Yousaf Asghar  
Yousaf Asghar  
Yousaf Asghar

Thanks  
[redacted]

[redacted]

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**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 14 March 2023 16:09

**To:** [redacted]

**Subject:** Pakistan correspondence

Dear [redacted],

Here's the letter I was talking about being in scope.

[SG internal system link, letter enclosed in FOI response].

[redacted]

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**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 28 February 2023 13:54

**To:** [redacted]

**Cc:** [redacted]; Primrose J (John) <John.Primrose@gov.scot>; [redacted]

**Subject:** FOI TRIAGE - Pakistan Consul General in Glasgow - 202300345026 / 202300345029

**Importance:** High

Hi [redacted] – Please can you act as case handler for these two FOI requests, I have assigned them to you on MiCase and John P will be the lead DD for clearance. This makes 5 in total – [redacted] has the other three - though for the most part the same information is being sought so you and [redacted] will want to work on them as a package. You will need to check in with the Private Office management Team (I've copied [redacted] and [redacted] above above) about the retention / destruction of PO records for this time period as 202300345029 is specifically asking for PO information.

[redacted] – please can you add both of these to the tracker so [redacted] can keep that up to date.

Thanks

[redacted]



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**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 14 March 2023 11:29  
**To:** Primrose J (John) <[John.Primrose@gov.scot](mailto:John.Primrose@gov.scot)>; [redacted]  
**Subject:** FOI summary

Dear John,

Here's a breakdown (based on the BMU spreadsheet) of where we are with the various FOI relating to Mr Yousaf and Mr Asghar.

<u><a href="#">Case reference</a></u>	<b>Handler&amp; Deadline</b>	<b>Request</b>
202300344917	[redacted] 24 March	All correspondence between then Minister for External Affairs and International Development, Humza Yousaf (or his office), and the Pakistan Consul General (or their office), between 1st November 2013 and 28th February 2014
202300344949	[redacted] 24 March	Background info of a vote (Mr Yousaf)
202300345032	[redacted] 24 March	Can you release all correspondence, documents briefings and notes from January and February 2014 regarding the case of Mohammad Asghar
202300345026	[redacted] 27 March	Pakistan Consul General in Glasgow

202300345029	[redacted] 27 March	Humza Yousaf 2014 correspondence with the Pakistan High Commission
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For reply in April		
202300346964	[redacted] 11 April	Correspondence between Cab Sec for Health & Social Care and the Consul General of Pakistan

Regards,  
[redacted]



**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 22 March 2023 09:05

**To:** [redacted]; Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care <[CabSecHSC@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecHSC@gov.scot)>

**Cc:** [redacted] Primrose J (John) <[John.Primrose@gov.scot](mailto:John.Primrose@gov.scot)>; Wightman S (Scott) <[Scott.Wightman@gov.scot](mailto:Scott.Wightman@gov.scot)>; FoI SpAds PO <[Fol.SpAdsPO@gov.scot](mailto:Fol.SpAdsPO@gov.scot)>; Permanent Secretary <[PermanentSecretary@gov.scot](mailto:PermanentSecretary@gov.scot)>; Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture <[CabSecCEAC@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecCEAC@gov.scot)>; DG Strategy and External Affairs <[DGSEA@gov.scot](mailto:DGSEA@gov.scot)>; [redacted]

**Subject:** RE: FOI for comment by 23 March

Good morning

I am attaching [**Note:** attachment for this case enclosed at 'Attachment 1' below] two further draft FOIs on this email trail as the context and subject matter with these are much the same as [redacted] submission outlines. These two (second/third attachment) relate to meetings and communication with the Pakistan Consul General in 2013/2014. An extensive but unsuccessful search has been carried out for official documents relating to the meeting mentioned in case 5026.

As with [redacted] cases, these are marked as routine and have already received the necessary DD clearance to issue. However, I will wait until noon on the case deadline of 27 September to allow for any comments before sending.

Thanks

[redacted]

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**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 21 March 2023 08:11

**To:** Primrose J (John) <[John.Primrose@gov.scot](mailto:John.Primrose@gov.scot)>; [redacted]

RE: Feedback from Reprieve and JPP on FOI

Hi [redacted]

While you're looking at final drafts, just a reminder that my two are with you for clearance – attached for ease of reference [**Attachment 1**].

[redacted]

[redacted]

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**From:** [redacted] **Sent:** 17 March 2023 09:30  
**To:** Primrose J (John) <John.Primrose@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** FOI review - case deadline 27 March

Hi [redacted]

With sincere apologies for the later than promised provision of these, please find two draft responses, which I'd be grateful if you would review.

[redacted], I have added one item of correspondence to the one you had helpfully found and forwarded on for the David Walker case

[redacted]

[redacted]

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[Attachment 1]:

## REQUEST

I'd like to request information through FOI legislation.

1. All correspondence (including emails, texts and phone calls) between Humza Yousaf's private office when he was Minister for External Affairs and International Development in 2013 and 2014 and the Pakistan consulate for Scotland/Pakistan Consul General.

If too much, reduce the time period to October 2013 until March 2014.

Cheers

David Walker  
Scottish Daily Express political reporter  
07930 029545

## DRAFT RESPONSE

### REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002 (FOISA)

Thank you for your request dated 26 February 2023 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA).

#### Your request

You asked for all correspondence (including emails, texts and phone calls) between Humza Yousaf's private office when he was Minister for External Affairs and International Development in 2013 and 2014 and the Pakistan consulate for

Scotland/Pakistan Consul General.

Response to your request

I have enclosed a copy of the information you requested. You will find attached two items of correspondence between Mr Yousaf and the Pakistan Consul General from September and December 2013. Please note that these documents have been gathered from records stored on the Scottish Government's official Ministerial correspondence system. Regarding other methods of communication you have asked for, private offices only hold correspondence for 3 months. It may be helpful to explain that Ministerial Mailboxes are primarily transactional – managing incoming and outgoing emails. The number of items and size (in GBs) of Ministerial mailboxes are monitored, and retaining emails for a maximum of three months is a key part of ensuring mailbox size remains below the level where the number of items and size of box starts to impact on mailbox functionality.

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to Scottish Government Director of External Affairs, Scott Wightman.

Scott Wightman  
Area 2H South  
Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh  
EH6 6QQ.

Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response, and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review in accordance with FOISA as soon as possible, and not later than 20 working days from the day following the date we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your appeal rights is available on the Commissioner's website at:

<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Unhappywiththeresponse/AppealingtoCommissioner.aspx>.

ATTACHMENTS

(no redactions)



LTR OF COND  
(005).pdf



Consul Saqlain  
Javed.pdf