

## Email chain 1

Sign off letter and approval: 23/11/2017 to 24/11/2017

### Relevant attachments:

- 'FOI 3387 Response.pdf'
- The Zip file named 'FOI 3387.zip' attached to the following email is the information that we published in response to FOI 3387 here: [Internal and external UKSA correspondence](#). Please refer to the download associated with this request to review this information.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 23 November 2017 14:20  
**To:** Bumpstead, Rob; [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FOI Request - Sir David Norgrove letter/FCO  
**Attachments:** FOI 3387.zip; FOI 3387 Response.docx

Hello Rob and [REDACTED]

Please find attached our draft response and the documents we intend to release to [REDACTED]. These documents have been sent to the FCO for comment (with a deadline of yesterday); we have not received a response.

If you are content with the response as it stands, I would like to send this to the requester tomorrow as promised. I will also send another email to the FCO to inform them that the response will be published by 15.00 tomorrow under the assumption there were no objections on their part.

Please could confirm whether you are happy to sign off the final response as soon as possible?

Let me know if you have any questions,

Many thanks  
[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED] on behalf of Bumpstead, Rob  
**Sent:** 24 November 2017 09:54  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: FOI Request - Sir David Norgrove letter/FCO

Dear [REDACTED]

Rob has now confirmed he is happy for this to go, also.

All best

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 23 November 2017 15:42  
**To:** [REDACTED] [Statistics.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@statistics.gov.uk)>; Bumpstead, Robert  
[REDACTED] [statistics.gov.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@statistics.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: FOI Request - Sir David Norgrove letter/FCO

[REDACTED]

Many thanks for sending this across, and for all your work pulling this together!

I think I am content with this. As you might be aware, Rob is at the GSS conference today, but I will pick up with him tomorrow morning when he returns (I have one tiny question on this for him). However, I would think that still means we are good to meet the timelines you set out below.

All best

[REDACTED]

## Email chain 2

FOI response sent to the requester and their reply: 24/11/2017

On 24 Nov 2017, at 18:33, [REDACTED] >  
wrote:

Dear Sir,

It is clear that you have withheld a considerable amount of information that has been requested as only scant information has been provided and that information cannot fully respond to the original FOI request.

The response is also considerably late.

I am concerned that you have wrongly approached the FOI request and have demonstrated a reluctance to properly deal with my FOI request by:

1. Unreasonably requesting Passport or similar identification.
2. Delaying the response unreasonably and without explanation.

You have now withheld information citing a qualified exemption.

Please internally review that decision immediately so that I may pursue the matter with the ICO at the first opportunity should I remain dissatisfied.

The FOI request was made to better understand the circumstances as to why Sir David felt it proper to choose to make his comments and how they came to be promoted.

For example it is clear that he has not intervened in this manner when other politicians have made clearly wrong use of statistics, yet did so on this occasion when the statistics in question are open to many interpretations.

The FOI request does not and should not trespass into the exemptions you mention; moreover there is a clear public interest in favour of disclosure that outweighs any withholding based on those objections.

The fact that documents may be embarrassing is not a ground to withhold disclosure.

If you maintain the grounds of objection, please identify against the original individual requests made which exemptions apply and over how many documents that exemption is claimed.

I look forward to hearing from you within 20 days.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

On 24 Nov 2017, at 14:42, FOI Team <[FOI.Team@ons.gov.uk](mailto:FOI.Team@ons.gov.uk)> wrote:

Our Reference: FOI 3387

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email requesting data pertaining to correspondence relating to the letter from Sir David Norgrove to the Foreign Secretary. Please accept our sincerest apologies for the delay in our response.

I am writing to confirm that the Office for National Statistics has now completed its search for the information which you requested and the response is as follows:

Please find attached the documents within scope of your request.

Some of the requested information has been withheld under exemptions within the Freedom of Information Act 2000, including personal information that has been redacted under s.40(2).

s.36(2)(b)(ii) - Relates to withholding information if disclosure would or would likely, inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation. The ability of UKSA senior management and Board Members to discharge their responsibilities effectively relies upon them being able to have free and frank discussion regarding politically sensitive subjects. It is our view that releasing certain information in this instance may limit similar future discussions and the willingness to provide full and frank information in future.

s.36(2)(c) - Relates to withholding information if disclosure would or would likely, prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs. One of the functions of the UKSA as recorded within the s.8 of the Statistics and Registration Act 2007 is to monitor the production and publication of official statistics, with the ability to report concerns about the quality, good practice and comprehensiveness of the statistics. Release of the information may undermine our statutory functions and thus have an adverse effect on our ability to offer an effective public service in the future.

The use of s.36 exemptions are subject to a public interest test. The arguments in favour of disclosure are the promotion of transparency and public accountability. Brexit and the £350 million claim are very much at the forefront of public debate. However, to release the information would not provide any further detail about our views than has already been made publicly available.

Arguments in favour of withholding the information are to ensure we have a safe space for current and future discussions with internal and external stakeholders. It would not be in the public interest for one of the key functions of the UKSA to be undermined in such a way that key stakeholders were no longer comfortable with

making difficult decisions. This could in turn lead to the misuse of statistics without suitable reproach in the future. In this instance we feel that the weight of public interest is in favour of withholding the information.

You have the right to have this response to your freedom of information request reviewed internally by an internal review process and, if you remain unhappy with the decision, by the Information Commissioner. If you would like to have the decision reviewed please write to The Fol Team, Room 1100, Office for National Statistics, Segensworth Road, Titchfield PO15 5RR, and mark your correspondence "Internal Review".

If you have any queries about this email, please contact the Freedom of Information Team ([foi.team@ons.gov.uk](mailto:foi.team@ons.gov.uk))

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Freedom of Information Team  
Office for National Statistics

For the latest data on the economy and society, consult National Statistics at <http://www.ons.gov.uk>

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Please Note: Incoming and outgoing email messages are routinely monitored for compliance with our policy on the use of electronic communications

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Legal Disclaimer: Any views expressed by the sender of this message are not necessarily those of the Office for National Statistics

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<FOI 3387.zip>

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For more information please visit <http://www.symanteccloud.com>

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