

Thank you for your request. 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 discussion 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 discussion 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.