



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Overseas Territories Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

15 April 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0205-16

Thank you for your email of 15 February asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

I wanted to request the information of why Sasha Wass QC was chosen for the job of heading up the inquiry into allegations surrounding child safeguarding issues on St Helena and Ascension Island?

I would also want to request the information of what other cases Ms Wass has represented the British government (esp FCO and DfID) in.

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

The information that we can release to you is attached.

Some of the information you have requested, is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances sections 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this principle, which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

We were considering the use of s35 to withhold information relevant to this request but have found that it is not relevant. Section 35 relates to the formulation of government policy. No information has been withheld under this exemption

You can see we consulted the Propriety and Ethics Team in the Cabinet Office, researched Ms Wass' background and then submitted to Ministers who confirmed they were happy to appoint her. Where it says in Document 3 "Following guidance from Ministers..." this relates

to conversations with the private secretary to Minister Duddridge as per the normal course of business, during our research into Sasha Wass. We had indicated her possible suitability before the submission went to the Minister and the Minister's office had agreed we could continue conversations.

The appointment was confirmed following discussions with Sasha Wass and then the Foreign Secretary announced her appointment in his Written Ministerial statement, which you can find here: (<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldhansrd/text/141120-wms0001.htm>). You can see from the WMS that the Foreign Secretary agreed to her appointment because of her experience.

We have no record of Ms Wass representing the Foreign and Commonwealth Office or the Department for International Development on any other cases. If you would like to know about any other UK Government Departments then you would have to consult them separately as we cannot answer on their behalf.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on gov.uk in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours sincerely

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