



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

**Government Hospitality
Protocol Directorate**
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

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

09 February 2017

Dear

Your Freedom Of Information Request: 0977-16

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 18 October. I am sorry it has taken some time to reply substantively to your enquiry.

You asked:

1...Since 1 July 2016 has Robert Alexander OBE the Head of Government Hospitality and or anyone acting specifically on his behalf exchanged correspondence or communications including emails with any of the following individuals.

Theresa May, the Prime Minister and or her private office and or anyone acting specifically on her behalf.

Boris Johnson, the Foreign Secretary and or his private office and or anyone acting specifically on his behalf.

David Davis, the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union and or his private office and or anyone specifically acting on his behalf.

Please note that I am only interested in correspondence and communications which relates to the management and or operation of the Government wine cellar (including its stocks) and or the provision of Government hospitality. This correspondence and communication could relate to the general issue of hospitality or it could relate to a specific event or allocation of wine.

If the answer is yes can you please provide both copies of the correspondence and communications including emails.

We have searched our records and we can confirm that we do hold some information relevant to your request. (Please note that there was no correspondence of the type specified between Mr Alexander and the office of the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU).

I attach a copy of a written submission to the Foreign Secretary from Mr Alexander about the release of the Annual Statement on the Government Hospitality Wine Cellar for 2015/16, dated 1 September 2016. The documents referred to in the submission were subsequently published on GOV.UK and are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/annual-statement-on-the-government-wine-cellar-for-the-financial-year-2015-to-2016>

As these documents are already accessible by other means, I have not included them with this response as they are exempt under section 21 of the FOIA.

Some information in the scope of your request has been withheld under section 35(1)(d) of the Freedom of Information Act – the operation of any Ministerial private office. The material concerned is administrative in nature and relates to the day to day running of the offices (for example confirming diary dates, menu preferences and dietary requirements). I acknowledge that there is a public interest in how Ministerial Private Offices operate and in ensuring that they do so efficiently. However, there is also a public interest in preserving a safe space for such offices to carry out their routine business in support of Ministers without external distraction or disruption. Taking into account the routine nature of the information in this case, I consider that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

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, section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Yours sincerely,

Government Hospitality
Protocol Directorate



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.