



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Protocol Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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27 November 2015

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 1108-15

Thank you for your email of 17 November 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

In response to my previous request you provided me with emails between the FCO and the producers of Downton Abbey. On page 16 of the released emails (attached) they reference a 'filming agreement'. I request that a copy of this filming agreement be provided to me. 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.

Please find attached the information that we can release to you.

Some information has been withheld from the released document under section 43(2) of the Act as its disclosure would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person. This exemption requires the application of a public interest test.

The use of this exemption was carefully considered. The factors in favour of disclosure of this information including the general public interest and greater transparency and accountability, were carefully weighed against the general need to allow business-people and commercial organisations the space to conduct their lawful business competitively and without fear of disclosure of sensitive commercial information. In this case after such consideration we believe that the public interest in withholding the limited amount of information which has been redacted, information outweighs the public interest in its release.

Some of the withheld information is personal data relating to third parties. It is our view that disclosure of this information would breach the first data protection principle, which states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. Section 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act therefore apply. It is the fairness aspect of this principle which we think would be breached by disclosure in this case. In such circumstances section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. We do not therefore have to apply the public interest test.

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Yours sincerely,

Protocol Directorate



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