



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Facilities Management Client Unit
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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17 December 2015

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 1006-15

Thank you for your e-mail of 19 October 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. In your e-mail you asked:

Would you please provide me with any letters or emails sent to Interserve by the FCO and/ or received from Interserve relating specifically to a letter sent by cleaners of the FCO building to the Foreign Secretary regarding the Living Wage.

It is reported that the letter sent by the cleaners to the Foreign Secretary was used by Interserve in an internal disciplinary process. I would like to know when this letter was forwarded to Interserve and what content may have been written on the letter or attached to the letter by FCO officials.

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. That information is attached.

The cleaners had previously written to the Foreign Secretary on this subject in July 2014, and to his predecessor in June 2012. These letters were shared with Interserve management as they are responsible for setting the terms and conditions of their employees. The FCO replied to both these letters, setting out the FCO's position in relation to the cleaners' wages. In addition, in July 2012, FCO officials met with the cleaners and Citizens UK to listen to their concerns. It was within this context that an FCO Official sent an email of 5 August 2015 to Interserve, with the intention of ensuring that, as Interserve employees, the cleaners should initially raise concerns about their pay with Interserve management.

This email was neither authorised nor seen by any Minister prior to it being sent. The FCO official who wrote the email has recognised that neither the content nor tone of it were appropriate and has expressed regret.

In his reply dated 17 October to a letter from Citizens UK, alleging that the cleaners had faced disciplinary action for writing to the Foreign Secretary, the Minister for Europe made it clear that he would regard it as wrong were any cleaners to be victimised because they had written to Ministers to set out their concerns.

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,

Facilities Management Client Unit
Estates and Security Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office



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