



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

29 February 2016

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0006-16**

Thank you for your email of 3 January asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*Please provide an electronic copy of the new guidelines referred to in this article (<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jan/03/tony-blair-and-ex-ministers-barred-using-uk-embassies-for-own-interests>) and of the immediately previous guidelines the new ones replaced.*

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 the FCO can release to you. Some information has been withheld under Sections 38 and 40 of the FOIA.

**Section 38 (Health and Safety)**

Some of the information requested is exempt under Section 38 (1) (b) because release could endanger individual safety. In applying the public interest test we again took into consideration the factors in favour of disclosure; in this case that releasing the information would demonstrate openness and public accountability regarding security arrangements. However, we consider that disclosure of such information could be used by others in the future to pose a significant risk to the personal safety of those covered by such arrangements. There is a strong public interest in withholding information that could endanger the safety of individuals and, on balance we concluded that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

## Section 40 (Personal Data)

Some of the information 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 FOIA 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.

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](http://gov.uk) in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

Yours sincerely,

PUS's Office



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.