



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

FCO Services
King Charles Street
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

14th May 2020

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: FOI 2020/05031

Thank you for your email of 19th March 2020 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

- 1. Can you please confirm if you are using the Microsoft Office 365 solution in your IT environment?*
- 2. If so, how you currently back up your Office 365 data? If it is backed up please confirm which software or service solution you currently have in place.*
- 3. If a system or service is in place to backup FCO Services's Office 365 environment can you confirm the retention period the data is stored for?*
- 4. Who in FCO Services is responsible for the protection of your critical data?*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested. I can confirm that FCO Services does hold information relevant to your request.

Question 1- Yes, FCO Services is using Microsoft Office 365 in its IT environment.

Question 2 and 3- Details of software, IT systems and therefore the retention periods used is withheld under Section 24 (1) and 31 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please see below for details of the exemptions applied;

Question 4- The role within FCO Services that is responsible for the protection of all data is the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO). I am withholding the name of the CISO under Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please see below for details of the exemption.

Section 24 (1)

Section 24 (1) is a qualified exemption, which means that it is subject to a public interest test. We acknowledge the public interest in openness and transparency and we recognise that releasing this information would provide the public with assurance that we are protecting our IT infrastructure and adhering to sufficient retention periods. We consider that disclosure of this information would not be in the interest of the UK's national security. Disclosing details about our back up arrangements could allow individuals to assess the strength of our defences. For the reasons set out above, we have assessed that the risk to our IT security outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Section 31

Section 31 is a qualified exemption, which means that it is subject to a public interest test. We acknowledge the public interest in openness and transparency and we recognise that releasing this information would provide the public with assurance that we are protecting our

IT infrastructure and adhering to sufficient retention periods. However, disclosure of the information requested could aid a criminal who was intent on launching an attack on the Department's ICT systems and could expose the FCO Services to potential threats such as targeted e-crime and expose the FCO Services to potential threats of a criminal nature. For the reasons set out above, we have assessed that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Section 40

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.

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If you would like a review of our decision, or if you wish to make a complaint, please write to the Central FOI Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Room WH2.177, King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AH. E-mail: foi-dpa.pmcs@fco.gov.uk. You have 40 working days to do so from the date of this letter. You can apply directly to the Information Commissioner. However, the Information Commissioner will not normally make a decision unless you have first exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the FCO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

FCO Services

