

Reference: 2026-043

Thank you for your email in which you requested the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA):

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I would like to request the following information concerning the use of non-disclosure agreements and settlement agreements containing confidentiality clauses with current or former members of staff.

For the purposes of this request, a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is defined as any agreement, or any clause within a broader agreement, that prevents or restricts a departing or former employee from disclosing information about the circumstances of their departure, any workplace dispute, or any conduct by the authority or its staff. This includes, but is not limited to, standalone non-disclosure agreements and settlement agreements (formerly known as compromise agreements) that contain a confidentiality clause.

The request is as follows:

1.a) In each calendar year from 2016 to the date of this request, how many settlement agreements or non-disclosure agreements meeting the above definition were concluded between the authority and current or former members of staff?

1.b) Please provide this information broken down by year. Where the number in a given year falls below five AND you consider that a precise figure risks identifying individuals, please amalgamate adjacent years so that each reported cell contains at least five agreements.

2.a) In each of the same calendar years, what was the total value of financial payments made to employees as part of the agreements described above?

2.b) Please provide this information broken down by year, applying the same approach to aggregation as in Question 1.b) where necessary.

3.a) Does the authority have any policy, guidance, or internal procedure governing the circumstances in which non-disclosure clauses may be included in settlement agreements or other agreements with departing staff? If so, please provide a copy or summary of that policy.

4.a) What is the total headcount of the authority's workforce as of the most recent available date? Please state the date to which this figure relates.

Please cover the period from 1 January 2016 to the date of this request.

If possible, please provide this information in electronic format, for example as a PDF, CSV, or spreadsheet file.

Response

Questions 1 a & b, 2 a & b

I can confirm that the SFO does not hold records of the requested information for the period from 2016 to 2023. With regard to the period following 2023, I can confirm that the SFO has not issued any exit settlements that include a non-disclosure agreement.

Question 3 a

The SFO adopts the Cabinet Office guidance, titled: "*Cabinet Office Guidance on Settlement Agreements, Special Severance Payments on Termination of Employment and Confidentiality Clauses*". It can be found under [Civil Service settlement agreements, special severance payments and confidentiality clauses - GOV.UK](#).

Question 4 a

The SFO had 610 members of staff in post as of the end of April 2026.