

Reference: 2026-065

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

1) Please state the number of formal requests for information made by your authority to the following centralised cryptocurrency exchanges:

- **Binance**
- **Coinbase**
- **OKX**
- **Bitfinex**
- **Kraken.**

In each of the following financial years:

- **2023/24**
- **2024/25**
- **2025/26**
- **2026/27**

2) Please state the number of these requests which were:

- a) **Fully complied with**
- b) **Not complied with or not fully complied with**

3) In each of the above financial years:

- a) **Please state the number of occasions that your authority has taken legal action against each exchange to attempt to force production of the records, in each of the above financial years.**
- b) **Of these, please state the number of these legal actions that resulted in disclosure.**

Response

Question 1 & 2

While the SFO holds the information you have requested, due to the scope of the questions we are unable to provide the requested information as it is exempt under section 12 of the FOIA.

How the exemption is engaged

Under section 12 of the FOIA, a public authority does not have to comply with a request for information if complying with the request would exceed the appropriate cost limit, which has been set at £600. A flat rate of £25 per person, per hour, is given for determining whether information is held, finding and retrieving records and extracting the requested information. This means the appropriate limit of £600 will be exceeded if more than 24 hours are required to complete the work, which would be the case in this instance.

The SFO does not hold a central log of requests made to cryptoasset exchanges. Each criminal case team and Proceeds of Crime and International Assistance (POCIA) team obtain authorisations to approach exchanges independently, and these are recorded within individual case files rather than in a single searchable system. To answer your request, we would need to identify all live and closed cases falling within the four financial years specified, check each one to establish whether a request was made to any of the five named exchanges, and then extract and collate the relevant figures. We estimate this would take a lot more than 24 hours of staff time, which exceeds the 24-hour limit and therefore the £600 cost threshold.

Section 12 is an absolute exemption and therefore does not require a public interest test.

We recognise that under section 16 of the FOIA, we have a duty to provide reasonable advice and assistance. Therefore, you may wish to consider submitting a refined request with a narrower scope, which may enable us to respond within the cost limit.

Question 3

We publish information about the SFO's cases on our website: [SFO cases - GOV.UK](#)

The SFO neither confirms nor denies whether it holds information falling within the description specified in your request. The duty in Section 1(1)(a) of the FOIA does not apply, by virtue of sections 30(3) of that Act. Nothing in my reply should be taken as an indication that the information you requested is or is not held by the SFO.

Section 30(3) provides that:

The duty to confirm or deny does not arise in relation to information which is (or if it were held by the public authority would be) exempt information by virtue of subsection (1) or (2).

Section 30(1) provides that:

- (1) Information held by a public authority is exempt information if it has at any time been held by the authority for the purposes of—*
- (a) any investigation which the public authority has a duty to conduct with a view to it being ascertained—*
 - (i) whether a person should be charged with an offence, or*
 - (ii) whether a person charged with an offence is guilty of it,*
 - (b) any investigation which is conducted by the authority and in the circumstances may lead to a decision by the authority to institute criminal proceedings which the authority has power to conduct,*
 - or (c) any criminal proceedings which the authority has power to conduct.*

How the exemption is engaged

Section 30(1) exempts any information held by a public authority if it has at any time been held by the authority for the purposes of (b) any investigation which is conducted by the authority, and in the circumstances may lead to a decision by the authority to institute criminal proceedings which the authority has power to conduct.

Section 30(3) allows the respondent to “neither confirm nor deny” whether any information is held in relation to the question where the requested information, if held, is described by section 30(1).

It is clear that your questions relate to information that you believe may be held by the SFO for the purposes of criminal investigations, as set out in section 30(1)(b), meaning the SFO must neither confirm nor deny whether the information is held in accordance with S30 of the FOIA (2000).

Public interest test

Section 30(3) is a qualified exemption and requires consideration of whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exclusion of the duty to confirm or deny outweighs the public interest in disclosing whether the public authority holds the information. More information about exemptions in general and the public interest test is available on the ICO's website at www.ico.org.uk

It is recognised that there is a general public interest in publicising the work of the SFO, so that the public knows that serious fraud, bribery and corruption are being investigated and prosecuted effectively and so that the public can be reassured about the general conduct of our organisation and how public money is spent. The SFO takes steps to meet this interest by publishing casework information on its website where appropriate.

However, it is also recognised that it is in the public interest to safeguard the investigative process and that investigating bodies should be afforded the space to determine the course of any investigation. On some occasions, releasing information about what is held or not held by law enforcement bodies would be detrimental to that process. To confirm or deny whether the information you have requested is held (if held) would, for reasons outlined earlier, be likely to prejudice the SFO's conduct of any criminal investigation/ability to tackle and prevent serious crime. This would not be in the public interest as the right of access to information should not undermine the investigation and prosecution of criminal matters.

Having considered the opposing arguments, it is clear that the benefits of confirming whether or not the information is held are outweighed by the disbenefits and thus the public interest favours maintaining the exclusion of the duty to confirm or deny whether information is held.