

24 April 2025

Case Reference IC-372149-V2K0

Request

You asked us:

"I am writing to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for the release of a legible copy of the email exchange between Dominic Cummings and Steve Wood.

This email is already publicly available in a redacted format on the UK Parliament website at the following link:

<https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/commons-committees/Privileges-Committee/correspondence-dominic-cummings.pdf>.

However, due to the formatting and quality of the published version, the text is difficult to read, and a clearer, more accessible copy would serve the public interest.

The information contained in this correspondence pertains to matters of government transparency and accountability, and the provision of a more readable version would enhance public understanding of the issues discussed.

As the document has already been disclosed in some form, I do not believe that exemptions under the FOI Act (such as Section 40 for personal data or Section 44 for statutory prohibitions) should apply.

I request that the ICO provide the document in a clearer, more readable format, ideally as a properly formatted PDF."

We received your request on 25 March 2025.

We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOIA).

Background

You are referring to the email exchange contained in a bundle which was submitted by the ICO to the Committee for Privileges in 2019.

This was submitted by the ICO for the purpose of the [Committee's First Report of Session 2017-19](#) into the Conduct of Mr Dominic Cummings.

The record of the ICO's submission is in the report on page 15 (under the reference [DCU0010](#)) and the link to the actual [bundle](#) is included there as well.

The material was derived from the ICO's [investigation into data analytics in political campaigns](#).

Our response

We believe the information you have referred to is accessible and legible, so we do not need to provide any further copies of it.

Because the information is already reasonably accessible to you, technically it is exempt under section 21 of the FOIA.

Section 21 states that we don't need to provide you with a copy of information when you already have access to it.

Section 11

Section 11(a) of the FOIA obliges a public authority to communicate requested information in an acceptable form which has been asked for by the requester.

In this case, we are unclear what that form would be, so we do not have a clear basis for giving effect to any such preference.

Reasons for decision and supporting information

In your request, you have demonstrated that the information is available online on a free, publicly accessible website.

We believe the information is presented in an objectively clear and legible format, considering factors such as the font attributes, the language choice, and the layout of the text, and also taking account of the widespread availability of tools to assist with reading documents, such as the ability to zoom in and out of documents.

We cannot pick out any obvious aspect of the email exchanges which are illegible, and we don't know what actions we would be required to take to be able to comply with your format preference.

The only information in the wider bundle of documents which we would consider illegible is found between pages 17 and 25. These were attachments to the preceding email in the bundle.

If this helps, we have **attached** a clearer copy of the most illegible part for you.

For anything else, we would be grateful if you could clarify which parts of the actual email exchanges between Steve Wood and Dominic Cummings are illegible or unclear, and why this is the case.

We may still hold the original bundle of documents, so we may be able to assist in some way. However, the information will not be straightforward to find, particularly due to the passage of time, so we may not be able to guarantee that we can comply with any specified requirements.

If you believe the redactions make the information unclear, you may wish to clarify this to us. However, the redactions were only made on certain elements of personal data, and we would not have any reasonable grounds to undo these redactions (ie, to provide an unredacted version).

We don't believe this affects any of the surrounding information and we don't consider that it has any adverse impact on being able to understand the information in the correspondence.

We don't believe there are any other contextual factors of public interest which would support a particularly strong case for publishing an unredacted version either.

Next steps

You can ask us to review our response. Please let us know in writing if you want us to carry out a review. Please do so within 40 working days.

You can read a copy of our full [review procedure](#) on our website.

If we perform a review but you are still dissatisfied, you can complain to the ICO as regulator of the FOIA. This complaint will be handled just like a complaint made to the ICO about any other public authority.

You can [raise a complaint](#) through our website.

Your information

Our [privacy notice](#) explains what we do with the personal data you provide to us, and sets out [your rights](#). Our [Retention and Disposal Policy](#) details how long we keep information.

Yours sincerely



Information Access Team
Strategic Planning and Transformation
Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water
Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF
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