From: FOI
To: [redacted]
Subject: FOI 012-25 - Response
Date: 21 March 2025 16:43:40

Dear [redacted]

Our Ref: FOI 012-25

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission.

The Commission aims to respond to requests for information promptly and regrets it has not done so within the statutory timeframe of twenty working days.

Your request is shown in bold below followed by our response.

You have asked for the following information:

Please provide copies of any correspondence with Reform UK concerning their reports that their bank account was frozen in the weeks leading up to the 2024 general election. Please conduct a search for these communications from June 2024 to the present date. For reference, here is a link to one of the claims made by Reform UK on an impermissible donor declaration that the Party's bank account had been frozen: https://search.electoralcommission.org.uk/English/Donations/I0587280.

Our response is as follows:

We hold the information you have requested.

We hold correspondence in relation to the information requested.

Reform UK submitted their Q3 2024 Donations report via the Commission's PEF Online database on 29 October 2024 and we published details of those donations on our database on 5 December 2024 below: https://search.electoralcommission.org.uk/?currentPage=1&rows=30&query=Reform%20UK&sort=AcceptedDate&order=desc&tab=1&open=filter&et=pp&isIrishSourceYes=true&isIrishSourceNo=true&date=Reported&from=2024-10-01&to=2024-10-30&prePoll=false&postPoll=true&register=gb&register=ni&register=none&optCols=RegisterName&optCols=CampaigningName&optCols=AccountingUnitsAsCentralParty&optCols=IsSponsorship&optCols=IsIrishSource&optCols=RegulatedDoneeType&optCols=CompanyRegistrationNumber&optCols=Postcode&optCols=NatureOfDonation&optCols=PurposeOfVisit&optCols=DonationAction&optCols=ReportedDate&optCols=IsReportedPrePoll&optCols=ReportingPeriodName&optCols=IsBequest&optCols=IsAggregation

We did correspond with the Mehrtash A'Zami, the registered treasurer of Reform UK, asking for clarification concerning four donations relating to the party's frozen

bank account.

The response received did give details of conversations between the party and its bank. The response was provided to us in confidence.

We do not intend to release this correspondence as it is exempt from disclosure under Section 41(1) of the FOI Act. The Commission considers the information you requested falls under this exemption. This is because the provider had a realistic expectation that the information would not be widely shared as it was provided in confidence. The information is not publicly available, and its release would be of detriment to the provider.

Application of this exemption is not subject to the public interest test. Nevertheless, the Commission recognises there is a public interest in transparency and accountability of public decision making.
However, there is also a public interest in maintaining confidentiality as releasing information would discourage individuals and organisations from confiding in the Commission or providing us with confidential information necessary to the conduct of our statutory functions.

Having carefully weighed the public interest relating to possible disclosure of the information requested under section 41(1), we are satisfied that it is not appropriate at this time to disclose the information which the Commission holds. The Commission considers this information exempt under section 41(1) as it would not be lawful to provide you with the information requested as it would lead to an actionable breach of confidence.

The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority and I trust that this information satisfies your request. If you are not satisfied with this response, please note that the Commission operates a review procedure, details of which can be found on the Commission website at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk/freedom-information/make-a-freedom-information-request.

Please also note that if you have exhausted all internal Commission review procedures and you are still not satisfied you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner. Details of this procedure can be found on the ICO website: https://ico.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

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The Electoral Commission
www.electoralcommission.org.uk