



Department for Business & Trade

Department for Business and Trade
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FOI2026/02238

9 March 2026

Dear Simon Hanna,

Thank you for your email of 9 February 2026 where you requested the following information:

I hereby refine the FOI request to:

I am seeking to understand your department's role in discussions relating to the United Kingdom–United States pharmaceutical agreement announced in December 2025.

For the period 1 July 2025 to 31 December 2025, please provide:

- 1. A list of external meetings held by Officials from the Department for Business and Trade with:*
 - representatives of the United States Government, including the US Embassy in London and the Office of the United States Trade Representative, and*
 - pharmaceutical trade associations, including the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA),*

where the subject matter related specifically to pharmaceutical policy, medicines pricing, NHS spending on branded or innovative medicines, or the UK–US pharmaceutical agreement.

For each meeting, please provide:

- the date of the meeting*
- the organisations represented*
- the general subject or purpose of the meeting*

I am not requesting minutes, correspondence or internal policy discussions, only the above summary information.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'), you have the right to:

- know whether we hold the information you require
- be provided with that information (subject to any exemptions under the Act which may apply).

We can confirm that the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) holds information in scope of your request, however this information is being withheld by virtue of section 27 (International Relations) of the Act.

We can confirm that the Department holds information in scope related to external meetings with representatives of the United States Government. The Department does not hold information related to external meetings with pharmaceutical trade associations.

The information we hold in scope of your request has been withheld under section 27 (International Relations) of the Act.

Section 27 (International Relations)

Information is exempt under section 27(1)(a)(c)(d) if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to prejudice:

(1) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice—

(a) relations between the United Kingdom and any other State.

(c) the interests of the United Kingdom abroad, or

(d) the promotion or protection by the United Kingdom of its interests abroad.

The Department is relying upon the first limb of this exemption – would – prejudice relations with any other State. If this information was released it would undermine trust in our bilateral relationship with an important ally and materially prejudice our relations with the United States of America (US).

When relying on this exemption, public authorities are required to consider the public interest. Below are the factors considered by the Department in favour of releasing and withholding the requested information:

Factors in favour of release

- There is a general public interest in openness and transparency in all aspects of Government, including its meetings with foreign Governments. It is in the public interest that the Department for Business and Trade takes appropriate measures to be transparent with regards to its international engagement.

Factors in favour of withholding

- The reasons given above must be balanced against the harm in releasing information that would prejudice our relationship with the US.
- In particular, our ability to facilitate the exchange of information and to reach agreements and maintain cooperation with the US in this work is vital. The US is a close ally, with whom we are currently negotiating the UK-US Economic Prosperity Deal. Should this information be released, this would undermine our relationship with the US, particularly as both countries work towards the implementation of the UK-US pharmaceutical agreement. This relationship enables the UK's ability to facilitate the exchange of information, to reach agreements and maintain cooperation in all aspects of trade.
- The effective conduct of international relations depends upon maintaining trust and confidence between Governments. The US may be reluctant to engage in future meetings with UK Government if this information were disclosed, which would also be a detriment to UK interest in progressing with the implementation of the UK-US pharmaceutical agreement, as well as our ongoing negotiations on the Economic Prosperity Deal.

When the above public interest arguments are considered, we have concluded that it is not within the public interest to release this information.

Appeals procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of receipt of the response to your original request and should be addressed to the Information Rights Unit:

Information Rights Unit
Department for Business and Trade
Old Admiralty Building
London
SW1A 2DY
Email: FOI@businessandtrade.gov.uk

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

Department for Business and Trade