



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**China Department**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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14 August 2014

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0678-14**

Thank you for your email of 11 July asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. Your request stated:

*Same-sex marriages will be allowed at British consulates in China, Russia, Azerbaijan and 20 other countries, but not in Hong Kong, according to the local consulate.*

*Can you release all email communications, unredacted, between all diplomatic mission staff from the British Consulate in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Government relating to same-sex marriage since January 2013 until July 2014.*

*Please swiftly release this information.*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested and that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

I enclose the following information:

1. Email from Hong Kong Consul General Caroline Wilson requesting a call on the Secretary for Home Affairs
2. Note Verbale sent to Hong Kong SAR government on the issue of same sex marriages.

A small amount of the information is being withheld as it is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances Sections 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this

principle which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances Section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure and there is no public interest test to apply.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless it is exempt. The information we have supplied to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

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Yours sincerely,

Hong Kong Desk Officer  
China Department



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