

# GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

[REDACTED]  
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA301020-8884

15 January 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

I write further to our email of 11 January 2021 and to provide you with our response to your request for information dated 29 October 2020. Once again, please accept our apologies for the delay in providing you with our responses.

You requested:

*In light of the comments given in your response, please could you provide the following information:*

- i. *Correspondence received by Sadiq Khan between 15th September 2020 and 22nd September 2020 relating to viral spread in London.*
- ii. *Notes relating to the interview given by Sadiq Khan with Sky News on 22nd September 2020.*

Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and I can confirm that our searches did identify a limited amount of information that was in-scope of your request.

## **Correspondence received by Sadiq Khan between 15th September 2020 and 22nd September 2020 relating to viral spread in London.**

Our searches identified one piece of correspondence that fell within scope of the first part of your request; a slide-deck of statistical information prepared by Public Health England (PHE) entitled, 'COVID-19: London overview and response summary slides'. This slide deck contains a detailed statistical breakdown on the levels of COVID-19 infection and transmission in the London population.

However, after careful consideration, the GLA considers that this information is exempt information under the provisions of section 36(2)(c) of the Act;

(2) *Information to which this section applies is exempt information if...disclosure of the information under this Act-*

*(c) would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs.*

This exemption provision refers to an adverse effect on a public authority's ability to offer an effective public service or to meet its wider objectives or purpose.

The GLA considers that the disclosure of this information would be likely to prejudice the effective conduct of the GLA's work to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in London.

Disclosure would also be likely to prejudice the GLA's relationship with PHE and other third-party organisations and public bodies whom the GLA is reliant on for the provision of COVID-19 infection and transmission data in the Greater London area. This would also be likely to consequently prejudice the GLA's ability to effectively manage its response to the COVID-19 pandemic in London and to take effective measure to support and protect Londoners and the London economy.

PHE has data-sharing arrangements with other organisations that are the source of the data in this slide-deck which permit data-sharing between government department and agencies. The information contains data and statistics not routinely published or otherwise made available by PHE.

PHE produce and publish significant statistical information on COVID-19 infection and transmission data. The information held in the slide-deck provided by PHE was not intended for disclosure into the public domain. If the information held by the GLA was disclosed into the public domain, it would be likely to prejudice the GLA's ongoing relationship with PHE and the continued provision of this level of data to support to the GLA's work.

The GLA's work to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to support the recovery effort are both proper and legitimate functions of the public authority.

The exemption provisions under section 36 of the Act constitute a qualified exemption from disclosure and are subject to the balancing of the public interest consideration favouring disclosure of the information against those which favour maintaining the exemption.

There is a general public interest in openness in the conduct of public affairs, and particularly where that relates to decisions made by the Mayor of London in relation to the GLA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, so that the public can have confidence in the GLA's process and is able to examine decisions taken on its behalf and scrutinise the processes which led to those decisions being taken.

However, we consider the public interest – i.e the best interests of the general public – would not be met if the GLA disclosed information which might prejudice its relationship with PHE and other stakeholders regarding the provision of timely, detailed and accurate statistic concerning COVID-19 infection and transmission rates in London.

While there is an obvious and understandable interest in detailed information concerning infection and transmission rates in London, we feel that this legitimate interest is met through the information made available through the publication of data through the following sources

- <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>
- <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases>
- <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/dvc1100dash/prototype/wrapper/index.html>
- <https://digital.nhs.uk/dashboards>
- <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/nhs-111-minimum-data-set/>

- <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/coronavirus--covid-19--cases>

On balance, we consider the balance of public interest in this matter favours maintaining the exemption and this information is therefore exempt under section 36(2)(c).

**Notes relating to the interview given by Sadiq Khan with Sky News on 22nd September 2020.**

I can confirm the GLA does not hold any information in-scope of this element of your request.

**Additional information**

In conducting our searches, we also located a paragraph in a meeting agenda which, although it is not in-scope of either part of your request, it does relate to the information you requested. Although it is not in-scope of your request, acting in the spirit of the legislation, we can release this to you.

*“National picture*

*PHE report that several surveillance indicators suggest that there were increases in COVID-19 activity at a national level between 31 August and 6 September. Case detections in England increased from 7,955 in week 35 to 12,217 during this week.*

*Nationally, case rates were highest in North West and Yorkshire and Humber. At a local authority level, incidence was highest in Bolton. Case rates continued to be highest in the 20-29 year age group.*

*Positivity rates increased in all age groups and regions with a particularly steep increase in positivity seen in 85+ year olds tested through Pillar 2. Among young adults there was been a shift in the demographic of cases in recent weeks from the highest rates among those in the most deprived groups towards those in the least deprived groups.*

*The following local authorities have been included in the watchlist following the weekly Local Action Committee meeting as areas of intervention: Bolton, Bradford, Oldham, Salford, Blackburn with Darwen, Preston, Pendle, Rochdale, Tameside, Manchester, Birmingham, Bury, Leicester, Kirklees, Solihull, Calderdale, Trafford and Sandwell.*

*Nationally there has been an increase in incidents in educational settings following the reopening of schools.”*

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference MGLA301020-8884

Yours sincerely



**Information Governance Officer**

If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the GLA’s FOI complaints and internal review procedure, available at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information>