



National Audit Office

The UK's independent public spending  
watchdog

Switchboard +44 (0)207 798 7000

Direct Line +44 (0)207 798 7264

Email [FOI@nao.org.uk](mailto:FOI@nao.org.uk)

Reference FOI-1701

Date 26 March 2024

Dear

### NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE WHATSAPP USE POLICY

Thank you for your request of 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024 for information about the National Audit Office's (NAO) WhatsApp use policy. Your request has been handled under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

We have searched our records and can confirm that we hold information within the scope of your request. Your specific request is set out in **Annex A**, along with our responses under each question.

We hope you find this response helpful. **Annex B** sets out the steps you may wish to take if you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request for information under the FOIA.

Yours sincerely,

**NAO FOI Team**



## **Annex A**

### **Request for information about NAO's WhatsApp use policy:**

(Your request is in italics and our response below)

*Dear National Audit Office,*

*1. What is your policy in regards to retaining and deleting of messages using the WhatsApp platform?*

#### **NAO response:**

The NAO WhatsApp usage policy states that WhatsApp should not be used for the creation, storage or sharing of corporate records, or information created or generated as part of an audit. Where informal conversations on WhatsApp lead to a decision relating to the NAO or our work, this should be documented through the usual NAO channels.

Where exceptions are agreed for using WhatsApp e.g., with external partners, on an NAO or personal device, any content shared must be managed in line with the NAO security, records, and information management and retention policies.

*2. Do officers dealing with FOI and GDPR have access to those messages if so can you provide a copy of the policy?*

#### **NAO response:**

The FOI Officers and Manager responsible for handling FOI and GDPR requests and enquiries do not have access to the WhatsApp messages on any employees' personal phones.

*3. Can you give me a copy of the last review of this policy?*

#### **NAO response:**

I have enclosed our WhatsApp usage policy with this letter for your information.

## **Annex B**

### **Statement of Policy**

Our policy is to respond to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as helpfully and promptly as possible, having regard to the principles set out in the Act. I therefore hope you are happy with the way we have handled your request. If you are not, then you should take the following steps. In the first instance, within 40 working days, write to the National Audit Office Freedom of Information (FOI) Team at [FOI.requests@nao.org.uk](mailto:FOI.requests@nao.org.uk) or by post to: FOI Team, Green 2, National Audit Office, 157-197 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9SP.

The FOI and Correspondence Manager will arrange a review, which will be conducted by a senior member of staff who was not involved in decisions relating to your original request. Once the review has been completed, we will write informing you of the outcome. 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 primary way of escalating your concerns to the Information Commissioner is at: [www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints](http://www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints). Alternatively, you can contact the ICO at [Contact us | ICO](#) or Information Commissioner's Office Wycliffe House Water Lane Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF.