

19 February 2019
Our ref: FOI24012019

102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

obr.uk

Dear,

Re: Freedom of Information Request.

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act, which we received on 24 January 2019.

You requested the following information:

1. Can you please confirm that the Government instructed you to make no forecasts before the referendum for what might happen if we left the EU?
2. Did you provide a comprehensive forecast to the Government before Article 50 was signed?

We do hold the information that you have requested.

I can confirm that the Government did not ask the OBR to produce a forecast of what might happen if we leave the EU, before the referendum. The Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act (2011) restricts the OBR from producing forecasts that take into account policies other than those set by Government.

The Prime Minister's letter to the President of the European Council that notified the EU of the UK's intention to leave, triggering Article 50, was published on 29 March 2017. We published an *Economic and fiscal outlook* on 8 March 2017. We asked the Government to specify its post-Brexit policy regime in relation to trade, migration and EU finances (the areas that most directly affect our forecast). As the full detail of these policies was not available we based our forecast on broad-brush assumptions that assumed an orderly exit, which we have also broadly applied since then. We set out the detail of our assumptions, and the exchanges with Government in the March 2017 *Economic and fiscal outlook* and in subsequent publications.

If you have any other queries about this letter, please send them to our enquiries inbox at obr.enquiries@obr.uk.

Yours sincerely

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Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

If you are not happy with this reply, you may request a review by writing to OBR Enquiries, Office for Budget Responsibility, 14T, 102 Petty France, London SW1H 9AJ or by email to obr.enquiries@obr.uk.

Any review request must be made within 2 months of the date of this letter.

It would assist our review if you set out which aspects of the reply concern you and why you are dissatisfied.

If you are not content with the outcome your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the OBR. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.