

[News story: Arrangement for exchanging information during the UK-US Trade and Investment Working Group](#)

The UK and US have set up the Trade and Investment Working Group with an aim to deepen our bilateral trade and investment relationship. The group has been discussing:

- how to provide commercial continuity for US and UK businesses when the UK leaves the EU
- what both sides can do in the short term to facilitate bilateral trade and investment

We cannot complete a free trade agreement (FTA) before leaving the EU but the UK and US will work together to prepare the ground for a future FTA once the UK has left.

An opportunity for growth

The US is our largest trading partner outside the EU, accounting for a fifth of all exports, and trade between the 2 countries is worth over £160 billion a year. It's also the single biggest source of inward investment into the UK, standing at £252 billion at the end of 2015. Our economic prosperity is enhanced by the depth of our trade, financial, cultural and investment links with the United States.

Exchanging information

To have successful discussions, the working group needs to exchange information. The UK and US have exchanged letters setting out our joint commitment to treat this information as confidential, unless both sides agree otherwise. As discussions involve exchanging information on how we can deepen our trade and investment ties, it's important for both sides to trust that this can be exchanged in confidence.

The agreement we have reached:

- does not supplant the government's duty to consider requests under the Freedom of Information Act
- is compatible with the [Cabinet Office guidance](#) on how the government should exchange classified or sensitive information internationally, with other government or organisations

Sharing information outside of government and the working group

Government has the discretion and autonomy to share information with bodies, groups or individuals. Under these arrangements, we have made the commitment to do so in a way that maintains the confidentiality of the information,

unless the UK and US governments agree it can be treated otherwise. The same applies to the US government's treatment of information relating to the Trade and Investment Working group shared by the UK.

UK government information regarding the Trade and Investment Working Group that is not shared with the US is not subject to these arrangements and will be treated as all other government information of the same nature.

Read the UK and US governments' letters on the treatment of information exchanged during the the UK-US Trade and Investment Working Group.

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