



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
www.gov.uk/defra

**Your ref:**  
**Our ref:** RFI6455  
**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> April 2014

Dear

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Cars, Hire Cars and Number Plates**

Thank you for your request for information about the purchase of cars, hire cars and personal number plates which we received on 23 March 2014. As you know, we have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**You asked:**

How much the department has spent on cars on an annual basis for the last three calendar years. This includes hiring cars and purchasing cars. I would like to know what car was hired/purchased, when it was hired/purchased, what it was used for, who was using it and how much it cost to hire/purchase.

I would also like to know if the department spent any money on personalised number plates. If so I would like to know how much was spent on an annual basis for the past three calendar years, what cars they were attached to, who was using the cars, and (if this can be released) what they said.

**Our response:**

The Department reports its annual expenditure in financial years (April to March) rather than calendar years. We have therefore answered your request for information on this basis, in respect of financial years 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13. Information relating to 2013-14 will be available in July 2014, once the Department's accounts for the year have been audited and published.

No cars were purchased within these three financial years.

The table below summarises expenditure on car hire in the three financial years.



<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
2010-11	£16,541
2011-12	£114,748
2012-13	£43,900

The figure for 2011-12 includes approximately £70,000 of costs related to the use of the Government Car Service (GCS) by the Secretary of State and Ministers. Although the GCS was used in the other two years in question, the transactions relating to those years were coded differently within Defra's financial system, and identifying them would involve a significant cost and diversion of resources from the Department's other work. Section 12(1) of the FOIA allows us to refuse a request for information if we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit, which currently stands at £600. On the basis of our estimates, we consider that the cost of gathering that additional element of the information would exceed this limit.

Information on what car was hired and what it was used for is not held by Defra, and I can confirm that to the best of our knowledge the information is not held by another public authority. We consider that disclosure of the names of who was using each hired car is likely to breach the first data protection principle in Schedule 1 to the Data Protection Act (DPA), which relates to the fair and lawful processing of personal data, in two ways. First, disclosure would not constitute 'fair' processing of the personal data; and second, disclosure would not satisfy any of the conditions for data processing set out in Schedule 2 to the DPA. Therefore, we have concluded that this information is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FOIA.

The Department has not spent any money on personalised number plates.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA, and in keeping with the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours

**Pam Beadman**

[pam.beadman@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pam.beadman@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

01904 455658

## Annex A

### Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

Most documents produced by Defra will be protected by Crown Copyright. Most Crown copyright information can be re-used under the Open Government Licence. For information about the OGL and about re-using Crown Copyright information please see The National Archives website.

Copyright in other documents may rest with a third party. For information about obtaining permission from a third party see the Intellectual Property Office's website.

---

## Annex B

### Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: [requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk)) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our website.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF