



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Protocol Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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10 August 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0425-16

Thank you for your email of 21 April 2016 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

Can I please request under the freedom of information act the exact cost of the recent visit of William, his wife and entourage to India and Bhutan? Including staff costs, transport costs, security, clothing etc. What exactly did we finance?

Can I also please request information re the exact objectives of this trip and “measurable” achievements set and if achieved?

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request. To establish whether we hold it I have checked with colleagues and our records.

The cost of flights for official visits made at the request of Her Majesty's Government, are met by the Sovereign Grant. The Sovereign Grant is provided by Government to the Royal Household in support of The Queen's official duties as Head of State. This also includes official duties undertaken by other Members of the Royal Family on behalf of The Queen. More information on the Sovereign Grant can be found online.

The Royal Household is fully financially accountable and the Sovereign Grant accounts are audited by the National Audit Office and laid before Parliament.

However the information about flight costs, that falls within the scope of your request, is being withheld under section 22 (information intended for future publication) of the FOIA. This information will be published in due course on the Royal website, and will be accessible at the following link: <https://www.royal.uk/royal-finances-0>.

Section 22 of the FOIA is a qualified exemption which is subject to the public interest test. We have considered the public interest in releasing the information against the interest of withholding it:

There is a public interest in demonstrating transparency by releasing the information with this reply. However, we can also achieve transparency through the future publication of this information on the Royal website.

There is a public interest in Government Departments providing information they hold that falls within the scope of a freedom of information request as quickly as possible. However, we need to balance this with the public interest in Government's ensuring the maximum cost effectiveness. Providing this information in response to a Freedom of Information request is

not the most cost effective way of placing this information in the public domain, when it will be published in due course on the Royal website.

We have therefore concluded that the public interest in withholding this information in our response to your request outweighs the public interest in releasing it.

The FCO is the department responsible for arranging official Royal visits in conjunction with the relevant British Embassy/High Commission, the Royal Household and the host government. The FCO pays for costs associated with official Royal visits, incurred in-country, for example accommodation, local transport, communications and official gifts, etc. We aim to keep expenditure as low as possible and follow the civil service guidelines on expenses.

Given that the visit happened only recently, bills are still being received and processed and the exact costs may not be known for some time. We would recommend checking again with us at the end of the financial year.

However, this information may be subject to other exemptions (including section 27 as mentioned in our letters of 23 May and 21 June 2016) under the Freedom of Information Act and this should not necessarily be taken as an indication that a request for further information under the Act would be successful.

In our letter of 21 June we also cited exemptions 37, 40 and 41, however we no longer consider these exemptions to apply.

With regards to your question on the objectives and achievements of this trip, as well as celebrating the broader bilateral relationships between the UK and both India and Bhutan, TRH The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge highlighted the opportunities and challenges faced by young people, and raised the profile of important social issues, including education and wildlife conservation. TRH raised money, and the profile of the work of charities, including Childline India and its partners supporting vulnerable people; and wildlife conservation projects, particularly concerning the one-horned rhino and Asian elephant.

TRH met over 2,000 young people in over 20 engagements in 5 different locations over 7 days. An important legacy of this trip will be the strengthening of people to people relationships, especially among the young. The extensive media coverage raises the awareness of the UK's relationships with both countries.

You can find responses to other FOI requests on the FCO's [website](#).

Yours sincerely,
Royal, Ceremonial and Honours Unit
Protocol Directorate

