



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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

Your ref:
Our ref: RFI 6281
Date: 11 February 2014

Dear Mr

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Visits to the US and Canada

Thank you for your request for information about visits to the US and Canada, which we received on 7 February. We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked for:

Full postal address of hotels staff within the Department used in the US and Canada for work related business in the calendar years of 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and to-date in 2014. Also the names of airlines and class of flight staff members used. Also if any staff member requested an upgrade of hotel accommodation or both in each of the years mentioned. The reason(s) why the request was submitted; the number of these requests that were approved or refused. Also the dates of each trip and the total cost of each trip abroad per member. If the cost per member is not available, then an overall total cost is fine.

In response:

We want to be as open as possible in answering requests. The FOIA also requires us to help people obtain the information they are looking for. Unfortunately, the amount of information you have requested is very substantial, and gathering it together 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 would exceed this limit and, as such, we are refusing your request in its current form.



Preliminary work has found that your request asks for information that the department does not hold and for information that would take a long time to compile. The cost of Defra staff time would thus be significantly above the £600 limit.

However, if you were to make a new request for a narrower category of information, it may be that we could comply with that request within the appropriate limit. We could extract the appropriate information from reports from Defra's sole travel provider. You could, for example, ask for:

The names and locations of hotels in the United States and Canada, that Defra staff have stayed at on official business, for the calendar year of 2013. Also for each visit include the dates of the visit and the total amount paid.

Or you could ask for:

Details of the flights taken to and from the United States and Canada, by Defra staff on official business, for the calendar year of 2013. For each flight include the dates, airline operator, class of cabin, departure and arrival cities and amount paid.

Please note that if you modify your request, we will handle it as a new request and so the 20-working-day deadline for responding to requests would then commence from the date that we receive the modified request.

I attach an annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service that you have received.

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

Yours

Pam Beadman

T: 01904 455658

E: pam.beadman@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Annex

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) 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