

4th September 2012

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0730-12

Thank you for your request dated 9 July 2012 under the Freedom of Information Act. You asked that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) should provide information regarding:

The cost to taxpayers of operating the Foreign Office gym in each of the last three years along with details of the prices charged for gym use i.e. cost of membership, cost of single use, any deals offer and charges for any treatments that are offered.

Further to our letter of 6 August, I am pleased to confirm we have now been able to conclude the public interest for section 43 (commercial interests) of the Freedom of Information Act. I apologise for the delay in answering your request.

I can confirm that the FCO does hold a small amount of information relevant to your request.

There are two gyms located in FCO properties. Both these gyms are run by independent companies, they are self financed by membership fees, *at no cost to the taxpayer*.

We are unable to supply any further information regarding membership fees as this information is exempt under Section 43 (2) of the FOI Act, which states that information is exempt information if its disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person.

Section 43 of the FOI Act 2000 requires the application of a public interest test. The use of this exemption was carefully considered. The factors in favour of disclosure of this information include the general public interest and greater transparency and accountability. These factors were carefully weighed against the general need to allow business-people and commercial organisations the space to conduct their lawful business competitively and without fear of disclosure of sensitive commercial information. In this case, after such consideration, we believe that the public interest in withholding the limited amount of information outweighs the public interest in its release.