



Department  
of Energy &  
Climate Change

**Redacted**  
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**Department of Energy & Climate Change**  
3 Whitehall Place,  
London SW1A 2AW  
[www.decc.gov.uk](http://www.decc.gov.uk)

Our ref: FOI2014/15985

October 2014

Dear **Redacted**

**Re: Freedom of Information Request**

Thank you for your email of 16 July 2014 in which you refined your earlier Freedom of information request reference FOI2014/13532.

Your earlier request

*“What information the department holds on the use of the department’s ministerial car by ministers over the past 12 months. I would be interested in as much detail as you have about pick up place and destination, journey time, reason for use of car etc.”*

Refined to:

*Can we limit the request to the Secretary of State. Perhaps you could keep the time period as wide as possible within the cost limit.*

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'), you have the right to:

- know whether we hold the information you require



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- be provided with that information (subject to any exemptions under the Act which may apply).

I can confirm that this Department holds information within scope of your request.

I wrote to you on 13 August explaining that we required some additional time to consider the balance of public interest with regard to Section 35(1)(d) of the FOIA. This exemption applies to information which relates to the operation of a ministerial private office. In considering this exemption we have balanced the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing the information. We recognise that there is a general public interest in ensuring that private offices operate efficiently, that they use resources appropriately, and in ensuring that ministers are provided with the administrative support in order for them to do their jobs effectively. This includes practical and personal arrangements for the Minister in order for him to conduct business effectively. We considered this exemption carefully and we have concluded that the public interest falls with disclosing some of this information.

We have also considered this request under Section 38 (1) (a) and (b) Health and Safety. Information is exempt if its disclosure would, or would be likely to endanger the physical or mental health of any individual, or endanger the safety of any individual. As above, in considering this exemption we balanced the public interest in withholding further details of this information against the public interest in disclosing the information. We have concluded that it would not be appropriate to disclose specific details of individual journeys made by any ministers in the Department because the information could be used to establish a pattern of movements which could endanger the safety of the Secretary of State and his driver.

I am able to inform you that the Department has only one government pool car assigned to it. The car is managed by the Department and used by all the Department's Ministers. Within the past twelve months the Secretary of State has used the car to make journeys between the Department, the Houses of Parliament, external events, airport/train terminus and his home.

You may wish to be aware that guidance on the use of official cars is provided in the Ministerial Code of Conduct which states:

- Ministers are permitted to use an official car for official business and for home to office journeys within a reasonable distance of London on the understanding that they would normally be carrying classified papers on



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which they would be working. Where practicable, Ministers are encouraged to use public transport.

- The number of ministers with allocated cars and drivers will be kept to a minimum, taking into account security and other relevant considerations. Other ministers will be entitled to use cars from the Government Car Service Pool as needed.

For further information click the following link:

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/ministerial-code-may-2010.pdf>

Departments are allocated a Departmental Pool Car and have access to a top-up service if more than one car is required on any given day.

### **Appeals procedure**

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to the Information Rights Unit ([foi@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:foi@decc.gsi.gov.uk)).

Information Rights Unit (DECC Shared Service)  
Department for Business, Innovation & Skills  
1 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0ET

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

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