

Department of Energy & Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2AW
www.decc.gov.uk

RE: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your e-mail enquiry requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) on the use of official government cars by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

You asked for an itemised list of every occasion that DECC has used an official government car since January 2011 detailing:

- date
- passengers (e.g. 'NAME OF MINISTER and special advisor', or 'NAME OF MINISTER and wife', or 'RED BOX ONLY' etc)
- travel from (POSTCODE or FULL ADDRESS)
- travel to (as above)
- cost

This information for Ministers is separately attached at **Annex A** and covers journeys made using the Ministerial Car Service provided by the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA). Please note that the information shows the start point and end point of the journey. Other journeys may have been made during the course of the period that the official car was in use, for example an official car may have collected a Minister from DECC's headquarters at the start of the day and returned him there at the end of the day, having transported him to appointments throughout the day. We do not hold records of who was travelling with Ministers.

The Ministerial Code of Conduct sets out the following guidance on the use of official cars:

Use of Official cars

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

10.13 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.

The Ministerial Car Service provides an on demand service specifically for UK Government Ministers using a pool of cars and security cleared, professionally trained drivers. This service has now ended. Going forward departments can be allocated a Departmental Pool Car and access to a top up service if more than one car is required on any given day.

In addition, the GCDA has operated as one of the Department's suppliers of taxis and hire cars for use by officials in the course of business. **Annex B** sets out the journeys made by DECC Officials using the GCDA's Green Car and other short-term car hire services. We have redacted staff names including those of senior civil servants (SCS staff) under Section 40 (2) of

the Freedom of Information Act. This is because a number of those civil servants who use the cars do so because of a disability. DECC has a duty to protect this information within DECC as well as externally.

From April 2012, the GCDA is no longer used to supply taxi and hire car services. As with Ministerial car journeys, the information shows the start point and end point of the journey. Other journeys may have been made during the course of the period that the GCDA car was in use.

When reading either Annex A or B please note the following.

- Where the postcode is blank, information is not available.
- In other cases the full postcode has been redacted as in some cases it would indicate the personal address of Ministers or other private households. Names of individual officials have also been redacted. This information is exempt under section 40 (personal information) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Section 40(2) provides that personal data about third parties (who would include Ministers' families) is exempt information if one of the conditions set out in section 40(3) is satisfied. Under the FOI Act disclosure of this information would breach the fair processing principle contained in the Data Protection Act (DPA), where it would be unfair to that person.

Appeal 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 department. 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,