

FOI Release

Information released under the Freedom of Information Act

Title: Money spent on Christmas Decorations, Parties and Cards

Date of release: 16 December 2014

Information request

1. How much money has been spent on Christmas decorations over the past three calendar years, up to and including this year? So information provided should be for Christmas 2014, Christmas 2013, Christmas 2012. Please could you break this information down year-by-year. If possible, please could you provide details of what particular Christmas decorations were used and their cost, i.e. Christmas trees, tinsel, baubles etc. Obviously in the case of this year's Christmas decorations, expenditure details should include money already spent and projected cost of purchases.

2. How much money has been spent on Christmas parties over the past three calendar years, up to and including this year? So information provided should be for Christmas 2014, Christmas 2013, Christmas 2012. Please could you break this information down year-by-year. In each instance where a party has been held, please could you provide details of which department/office the party was for, how much money was spent, the date and the venue. Obviously in the case of this year's Christmas party, expenditure details should include money already spent and projected cost of the party/parties.

Please note: the term 'parties' should include any lunches, dinners or away days associated with Christmas.

3. How much money has been spent on Christmas cards over the past three calendar years, up to and including this year? So information provided should be for Christmas 2014, Christmas 2013, Christmas 2012. Please could you break this information down year-by-year and also separate the cost of purchasing the cards and the postage costs. Also, please could you detail how many Christmas cards were sent out in each year. In the case of this year's Christmas cards, expenditure details should include money already spent and projected cost of sending. If possible, please could you provide a sample copy of the design on the Christmas card that was sent out.

Information released

There are no records to show that this Department spent any money on Christmas decorations, parties or cards due to the following factors:

1. The Department has had a tree on display since 2011. Both the tree and baubles on the tree were donated to the department.
2. The Department does not fund or hold parties including lunches, dinners or away days associated with Christmas.
3. In 2012, 2013 and 2014, the Department produced electronic Christmas cards for Ministers and other senior officials. The cards are designed in-house and sent by e-mail, incurring no purchase or postage costs for the Department. Should Ministers choose to send anything other than the electronic Christmas cards they do so as private individuals. These are not funded by the Department.