



Department
of Energy &
Climate Change

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Department of Energy & Climate Change

3 Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2AW

www.decc.gov.uk

Our ref: FOI 14/0686

27 May 2014

Dear **Redacted**

Re: Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your email of 30 April 2014 in which you requested the following:

"I seek the following information on the number of meetings the

(a) Secretary of State, and other

(b) Ministers in the Department,

(c) their staff

(d) and senior civil servants,

had with representatives of

(1) Christian charities,

(2) campaign groups with links to Christianity, or

(3) Christian faith leaders,

(a1) during the leadership of the coalition Government, and

(b2) under Prime Ministers Gordon Brown."

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

- know whether we hold the information you require
- be provided with that information (subject to any exemptions under the Act which may apply).



a1) During the leadership of the coalition Government

(a) Secretary of State, and other ; (b) Ministers in the Department,

Information already in the public domain is exempt under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act) as we are not required to provide information which is already reasonably accessible to you. Details of the Secretary of State and Ministers meetings with external organisations from May 2010 to September 2013 have been published and can be found on the www.gov.uk website at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=department-of-energy-climate-change&publication_type=transparency-data

Meetings prior to April 2012 are available on the National Archives website at the following link:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130102164008/http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/accesstoinform/registers/ministermtgs/ministermtgs.aspx>

Information about meetings after September 2013 are exempt under Section 22 of the Act as the information is intended for publication at a future date on the www.gov.uk website. Section 22 is a qualified exemption and we have therefore considered the public interest test. There is a public interest in knowing information about ministerial meetings as this leads to greater transparency in government. However, the best use of public resources would be applied in pulling this information together, ensuring the information is accurate and published in a consistent and comprehensive format, rather than issuing it in a piecemeal fashion. This information is still being checked prior to publication. Please be assured that the Department is committed to publishing this information. Having considered the public interest test, the Department's decision is to withhold the information about meetings after October 2013.

c) their staff ; (d) and senior civil servants,

With regard to Ministerial Private Office staff, I can confirm that they do not hold meetings with external organisations or their individual representatives. However, they provide administrative support to ministers at meetings.

The Department does not hold a central record of all meetings between its senior civil servants and external organisations or their individual representatives. To provide you with all the information falling within the scope of this part of your request would require a search of all paper and electronic



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records, calendars and emails of all the senior officials in the Department to establish whether any meetings took place which may fall within scope of your request. From our preliminary assessment, we estimate that complying with this part of your request would exceed the cost limit of £600 provided under Section 12 of the Act. This represents the estimated cost of spending 3.5 working days: (i) determining whether the department holds the information, and (ii) locating, retrieving and extracting the information. The Act provides that we are not obliged to comply with requests where the estimated cost of complying would exceed this limit.

(b2) under Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

With regard to your request for details of meetings during the leadership of the Government of Prime Minister Gordon Brown, to complying with this part of your request would require a search of all paper and electronic records of every senior official and Ministerial Private Office in the Department to establish whether any meetings, within scope of your request, took place.

We estimate that complying with this part of your request would also exceed the cost limit provided under Section 12 of the Act.

It would be helpful if you could refine these parts of your request by providing details as to the information you particularly wish to obtain. This might include confining your request to meetings with specific Christian Charities or named individuals; providing a subject or topic and specifying a shorter time period. We would be happy to consider whether any revised request could be dealt with within the cost limit.

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).

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.



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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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