



Ministry  
of Defence

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Policy Secretariat

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Your Reference:

Our Reference:

Date:  
18 December 2014

Dear ██████████

Thank you for your email dated 25 November 2014. You asked:

***[for] the following information, relating to your Business Travel programme between the dates of January 2013 to date.***

- ***Do you use a Travel Management Company (TMC) to book travel on behalf of your employees for business travel?***
- ***Which TMC(s) are you currently contracted to?***
- ***What is your annual spend on Business Travel?***
- ***What are your transaction fees for each of the following:***
  - ***Air (Domestic and International)***
  - ***Hotel***
  - ***Rail (Domestic and Eurostar)***
  - ***What other fee's do you pay for TMC services?***

***I should prefer to receive these in electronic format at this email address if possible.***

***It would be helpful if you were to provide any brief notes which might be necessary.***

Defence Equipment & Support

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). A search for the information has been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held.

However, we considered that information about transaction fees fell within the scope of the following qualified exemption: Section 43 (*Commercial Interests*). As such it has been necessary for us to decide whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemptions outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

We have now completed this work and I can tell you that we have concluded that information about transaction fees does fall within the scope of the qualified exemption provided for at Section 43(2) (*Commercial Interests*) of the FOIA and has been withheld.

Section 43(2) provides that information is exempt if its disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any organisation or person holding it, including the MOD and its contractors.

The FOI Act contains a presumption in favour of disclosure and there is a public interest in the release of information which supports the accountability of the MOD for its use of public money; for example, to demonstrate that value for money is being obtained for taxpayers and that effective contractual processes are in place. Greater transparency of decision making processes makes government more accountable and the release of information would allow an increased public understanding of how the procurement processes are undertaken in an open and honest way.

The Public Interest Test also recognised that releasing information about transaction fees would prejudice commercial interest and weaken a company's position (in this case the current contractor) in a competitive environment by revealing market sensitive information or information of potential usefulness to its competitors. The MOD's ability to secure best value for money could also be affected.

Service and civilian Ministry of Defence personnel are mandated to utilise the Defence Travel (DT) services when booking official (duty) travel. DT is part of the Central Government Travel Management Service which is provided under contract by the Hogg Robinson Group (HRG) and provides a comprehensive booking service in both the UK and overseas.

In financial year 2013/2014, against this contract, the total spend on Business Travel for air, rail and overseas car hire was £ 74.9 million. This figure excludes transaction fees and other associated charges and is broken down as follows:

Air: £58.5 million

Rail: £13.4 million

Overseas Car Hire: £3 million (UK car hire is not part of the HRG contract)

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate the case until the internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>

Yours sincerely



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