



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

*Human Resource Directorate
WH.G.104
King Charles Street
SW1A 2AH*

01 November 2013

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0825-13

Thank you for your request dated 09 September 2013 under the Freedom of Information Act asking for the following information:

- **How much money have you spent on civil service away days and team building exercises since May 2010?**
- **How often are these away days and/or team building exercises?**
- **Who takes part in these away days and/or team building exercises?**
- **What kinds of activities take place on these away days and/or team building exercises?**

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested

I can confirm that the FCO does hold information relevant to your request.

An official away day can provide many benefits including allowing staff to consider important issues without interruptions and to discuss important strategic and management issues. However, the FCO is also determined to play its part in contributing to the savings needed to address the budget deficit. This is one of the areas where we have sought to achieve savings. In line with Treasury guidance on managing public money, any expenditure on such events is kept to a minimum.

Her Majesty's Government has informed all Government Departments that they should not fund away days from the public purse. Therefore, there should not have been any expenditure against away days.

However, to check that this is the case would entail checking every spend against FCO accounts. This would require us to contact every department and overseas post within the FCO asking them to search their files for the relevant information.

Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. For central government the appropriate limit is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 3 ½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it. Your request as presently formulated is widely-framed and I estimate that it will take more than 3 ½ working days to locate, retrieve and extract this information. In these circumstances we are not obliged under the Act to comply with your request. You may therefore wish to refine your request to narrow its scope to bring it within the appropriate limit. You may wish to refine your request to a particular department or overseas post within the FCO.

I hope this reply is helpful and establishes what you have asked for in your FOI request.

You can also find out more about previous FOI replies published on our website at Publications - Inside Government - GOV.UK

Yours sincerely,

Knowledge Management Officer
Human Resource Directorate



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.