



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Your ref:
Our ref: RFI 6922
Date: 27 October 2014

Dear

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Unauthorised removal of items over £50

Thank you for your request for information about items with a value of over £50 which have been taken without authorisation from the department in each of the last three years. As you know, we have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You requested a list of all items with a value of over £50 which have been taken without authorisation from the Department in each of the last three years; and what steps have been taken to recover such items.

Following careful consideration, we have decided we cannot disclose all of this information.

The tables in Annex C provides the information we can disclose, details of items reported stolen in the last three full financial years. As requested, the tables show what was taken, and the value of the item. In some cases it details the location from where it was taken, in other cases we have disclosed only the category of place from which the item was taken. These are categories Defra uses to record losses for security purposes.

Any suspected loss or theft of property belonging to the Department is reported to Defra Security. These losses are subject to internal investigation, and are referred to the police where appropriate. The theft of any item from outside of the office also must be reported to the police by the member of staff affected.



The exact location from where equipment was taken is being withheld in some cases, as it falls under the exemption in section 31(1)(a) of the FOIA, which relates to law enforcement. In applying this exemption we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosure of information concerning the exact locations where items were taken from. On the other hand, there is a strong public interest in withholding the information because listing the exact location of the thefts could help criminals identify where to target attempts to steal from staff members, putting staff and their equipment at increased risk.

I confirm that in cases where staff had equipment stolen when their homes were burgled, Defra does hold their home addresses, but in these cases we have decided that this information should additionally be withheld under section 40(2) (third party personal data) of the FOIA. We consider that disclosure of this information is likely to breach the first data protection principle in Schedule 1 to the DPA, which relates to the fair and lawful processing of personal data, in two ways. First, disclosure would not constitute 'fair' processing of the personal data, second, disclosure would not satisfy any of the conditions for data processing set out in Schedule 2 to the DPA. Therefore, we have concluded that this information is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FOIA.

The exact locations from where items have been taken have therefore been redacted and we have instead given an indication of the security category under which the location was recorded in the table in Annex C.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA, and in keeping with the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on www.gov.uk together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you. I also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact the address below.

Yours sincerely,

Defra FOIA and EIRs Team

InformationRequests@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A

Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Annex C

Items reported as stolen from the Department in the past three financial years:

April 2011- March 2012			
Item	Total	Taken From	Value per Item (excluding VAT)
Lenovo Thinkpad – encrypted laptop computer	4	[location exempt, s. 31 and s. 40(2)] User's home – burglary	£377
Lenovo Thinkpad – encrypted laptop computer	1	[location exempt, s. 31] User's bag in hotel / bar / restaurant	£377
Lenovo Thinkpad – encrypted laptop computer	1	[location exempt, s. 31] User's bag on public transport	£377
Blackberry mobile phone	1	[location exempt, s. 31 and 40(2)] User's home – burglary	£168
Blackberry mobile phone	1	[location exempt, s. 31] User's bag in hotel / bar / restaurant	£168
MyReader – low-vision screen reader	1	In transit to repair facility	£3,800
Codec – for use in radio interviews (a Codec is a device or computer program capable of encoding or decoding a digital data stream or signal)	1	Defra Office	£3,510

April 2012 – March 2013			
Item	Total	Taken from	Value per Item (excluding VAT)
Lenovo Thinkpad – encrypted laptop computer	2	[location exempt, s. 31 and 40(2)] User's home – burglary	£352
Lenovo Thinkpad – encrypted laptop computer	2	[location exempt, s. 31] User's bag in hotel / bar / restaurant]	£352

Lenovo Thinkpad – encrypted laptop computer	1	[location exempt, s. 31] User's bag on public transport	£352
Blackberry mobile phone	1	[location exempt, s. 31] User's bag in hotel / bar / restaurant	£188

April 2013 – March 2014

Item	Total	Taken from	Value per Item (excluding VAT)
Lenovo Thinkpad – upgraded encrypted laptop computer	4	[location exempt, s. 31] User's bag in hotel / bar / restaurant	£648
Lenovo Thinkpad – upgraded encrypted laptop computer	2	[location exempt, s. 31] User's bag on public transport	£648
Polycom VTX 1000 – telephone conference unit	22	Defra offices during upgrade project	£466
Extension microphones for VTX 1000 Spiderphone	6	Defra offices during upgrade project	£93
Video conference sets: camera, microphone & handset	4	Defra offices	£3,750