



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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

Your ref:
Our ref: RFI 6403
Date: 31 March 2014

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: The Departments Spend on Alcoholic Drinks

Thank you for your request for information about the total amount DEFRA spent on alcoholic drinks in each of the years 2010 - 2013, which we received on 13th March. As you know, we have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked:

Please supply me with the total amount DEFRA spent on alcoholic drinks in each of the years 2010 - 2013 with a breakdown by price of what it was spent on: beer/wines/spirits etc

In response

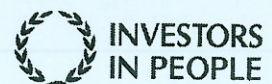
We don't have an account code on our financial system specifically for alcohol purchases. So we unable to check the system for specific purchases. In addition the department's Hospitality Register has no outgoing gifts of alcohol recorded for the period between 2010 – 2013.

The department's Staff Expense (Travel & Subsistence) Policy states:

"Alcohol cannot form part of any claim."

and

"Costs relating to Alcohol will not be reimbursed."



The Department has a Government Procurement Card (GPC) Policy which stipulates:

“unless prior permission has been received from the Head of Procurement a GPC must not be used in the following circumstances – the purchasing of alcoholic beverages”.

The department's Code of Conduct policy states under the Health and Safety heading:

“To protect your health and safety and that of your colleagues you must not consume alcohol on Defra premises except in organised social/launch events where permission is granted by a Senior Manager (Grade 6 or above).”

It is possible that there are some alcohol expenses rolled up in the hospitality figures from official events. The disproportionate cost would be going through each of these invoices to check this and investigate possible alcohol expense.

Defra spent £122,807 on hospitality in 2012/13.

The largest amounts were:

- £2011.45 for refreshments and lunch for attendees at a Water Quality – Water Programme event. Invoice shows no alcohol, only soft drinks.
- £1814.40 for an individual's expenses claim relating to Drinking Water Inspectorate hospitality. The claim did would only be approved by the Deputy Senior Responsible Officer if it met Defra's policy.
- £1406.25 for an individual's expenses claim relating to EU/International Chemicals & Nanotechnology hospitality. The claim did would only be approved by the Deputy Senior Responsible Officer if it met Defra's policy.

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 me.

Yours

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Annex A

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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

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

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