



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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

Your ref:
Our ref: RFI 6386
Date: 31 March 2014

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Airport and Train Station Lounges

Thank you for your request for information about airport and train station lounges, which we received on 6 March 2014. As you know, we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked

How much has your department spent on providing access to 1) airport lounges and rest areas and 2) train station lounges and rest areas for a) Ministers of elected representatives of the department b) staff allocated to or representing the department and c) political appointments, including special advisors, to the department in the financial years since May 2010.

Our response

We have interrogated our financial systems to search for entries relating specifically to lounges, but no transactions were found.

The FOIA requires us to help people obtain the information they are looking for. Unfortunately your request is very specific, and to review all flight- and train-related transactions since May 2010 in more detail to determine whether the cost included use of a lounge would require investigation of an enormous amount of information. Gathering it together would involve a significant cost and diversion of resources from the Department's other work.

Section 12(1) of the FOIA allows us to refuse a request for information if we estimate that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit, which currently stands at £600. On the basis of our estimates, we consider that the cost would exceed this limit and, as such, we are refusing your request.



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However, if you were to make a new request for a broader category of information, it may be that we could comply with that request within the appropriate limit, although I cannot guarantee that this will be the case. The best way we can help you is to ask you to consider amending your request to focus more generally on the information you are seeking. You could, for example, browse through the material that has already been made publicly available by Defra to see if this would help you identify more precise questions that we might be able to answer at lower cost.

The links below will take you to the latest set of Departmental accounts and expenditure information already published online in respect of Special Advisers.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-annual-report-and-accounts-2012-to-2013>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/special-adviser-data-releases-numbers-and-costs-october-2013>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/special-advisers-transparency-publications>

Please note that if you modify your request, we will handle it as a new request and so the 20-working-day deadline for responding to requests would then commence from the date that we receive the modified request.

I attach an annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service that you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me.

Yours

Pam Beadman
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01904 455658

Annex

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