

FOI Release

Information released under the Freedom of Information Act

Title: Gifts and Hospitality extended to UKTI staff from 2013

Date of release: 14 September 2015

Information request

Details of the gifts and hospitality extended to UKTI staff by companies, lobbyists, peers and former officials in 2013-14 as released to the Sunday Times.

Information released

I can confirm that UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) holds information falling within the terms of your request.

Some of this information is already in the public domain and is therefore exempt under Section 21 of the Act as we are not required to provide information which is already reasonably accessible to you. The information in relation to Ministers (up to June 2014) and for the UKTI's Chief Executive (up to March 2014) is published on the following websites:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bis-quarterly-publications-april-to-june-2012>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/bis-directors-general>

Additionally, information falling within the scope of your request, covering any time after that subject to section 21 and up to the date your request was received, relating to Ministers and UKTI's Chief Executive is also held by the Department. However, this information is exempt from disclosure under Section 22 of the Act because the information is intended for publication at a future date.

Section 22 is a qualified exemption and we have therefore considered the public interest test.

We acknowledge the public interest in favour of transparency. However, given the necessary preparation and administration involved in publishing the information, we consider that the best use of public resources would be directed to pulling this information together, ensuring the information is accurate and published in a consistent and comprehensive format, rather than in a piecemeal fashion. Having considered the public interest, we consider that the public interest in disclosing this information is outweighed by the public interest considerations in favour of withholding the information. The Department's decision is therefore to withhold the information.

Please see attached spreadsheets for all remaining information held within scope of your request, relating to Senior Civil Service (SCS) and non-SCS UKTI staff. This information has previously been disclosed under the Act.

UKTI works with UK based businesses to ensure their success in international markets through exports and encourage and support overseas companies to look at the UK as the best place to set up or expand their business. To provide these services UKTI officials are required to regularly meet and interact with companies they are assisting. In carrying out these duties officials may receive trivial gifts or hospitality from companies. The vast majority of the hospitality accepted relates to working lunches, dinners and receptions hosted by companies. In most cases the hospitality will include an opportunity to discuss business opportunities.

In assisting companies to expand and grow, the work of UKTI officials not only benefits the company, but the growth of the UK economy, which is in the public interest.