



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Protocol Visits Team**

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

04 April 2016

Dear

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0327-16**

Thank you for your email of 22 March 2016 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*On your website you have provided information in relation to the cost of providing accommodation, transportation and other expenses to delegations from foreign nations who are either Guests of Government or on a State Visit.*

*In relation to the following visits that appear on your website please state the number of guests, the number of nights accommodation that was provided in total and the name of the hotel that was used.*

*1 Afghanistan 4-6 Dec 2014*

*2 Singapore 20-24 Oct 2014*

*3 Ireland 8-11 April 2014*

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

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

Please find below the information that we can release to you.

Date	Country	Number of guests covered by FCO	Number of nights
4-6 December 2014	Afghanistan	11	3
20-24 October 2014	Singapore	12	5
8-11 October 2014	Ireland	12	4

The information you requested about the name of hotels is being withheld under Section 43(2) of the FOIA. Section 43(2) protects information which would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

In applying section 43 we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing it.

The use of this exemption was carefully considered. The factors in favour of disclosure of this information, including the general public interest and greater transparency and accountability, were carefully weighed against the need to allow business-people and commercial organisations the space to conduct their lawful business competitively and without fear of disclosure of sensitive commercial information. We consider that this transparency also poses risks to the protection of commercially confidential information. Failure to protect such commercially sensitive information would limit the sources of information and interlocutors available to the FCO and limit the FCO's ability to achieve the best hotel rates possible when organising State and Guest of Government visits. In this case after such consideration we believe that the public interest in withholding the redacted information outweighs the public interest in its release.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours sincerely,

Visits Team  
Protocol Directorate



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