



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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05 May 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: FOI 0346-17

Thank you for your email of 6 April 2017 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

- 1. How many official visits to the UAE were conducted by FCO ministers in the last 5 years.*
- 2. For each of these official visits, a) which FCO ministers attended, and b) what was the main purpose of the visit.*
- 3. What was the cost of the official visits and who paid for them.*

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. However, this information is exempt from release under section 21 (information accessible to the applicant by other means) and section 22 (information intended for future publication) of FOIA.

Overseas visits from April 2012 to 31 December 2016: information the FCO holds on Ministerial meetings that took place during this period is exempt from disclosure under section 21. Information on overseas visits by FCO Ministers – including the name of the Minister who went on the visit, the dates of travel, the cost of the visit, the means of travel, the purpose of each visit and who the Minister met with – is published on the GOV.UK website at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/minister-data>.

Overseas visits, from 1 January 2017 to present: information the FCO holds on Ministerial meetings that have taken place during this period is exempt from disclosure under section 22. Information on overseas visits by FCO Ministers since 1 January 2017 will be published on the GOV.UK in due course.

Section 22 is subject to a public interest test. We have considered the public interest in releasing the information against the interest in withholding it. There is a public interest in transparency being demonstrated by releasing the information with this reply. There is also a

public interest in government departments providing information they hold that falls within the scope of a request as quickly as possible.

However, transparency is also achieved by the government publishing this information on the FCO website. Providing this information now is not the most cost effective way of placing this information in the public domain when it will be published in due course on the FCO website. We have therefore concluded that the public interest in withholding this information out-weighs the public interest in releasing it.

Yours sincerely,

Gulf Team
Arabian Peninsula and Iran Department



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