



Ministry  
of Defence

Air Command Secretariat  
Spitfire Block  
Headquarters Air Command  
Royal Air Force  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
HP14 4UE

Ref: 2020/07316

[REDACTED]

8 September 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your e-mail of the 1 June 2020 requesting the following information;

I request the following under the Freedom of Information Act:

1. The number of cadets, CFAVs, RAFAC permanent staff (civil servants) and other RAFAC personnel who have participated in this exchange in the past 10 years. Please break down numbers by CFAV/Staff/Cadet and year.
2. The cost of sending the RAFAC personnel on the 2019 exchange. Please break down costs as specifically as possible (eg flights, accommodation, volunteer allowance, payments made to Ukrainian Air Force etc). Please specify how the costs were met, for example by taxpayer money, by GPF or by the individual's funding.
3. All communications, internal and external, regarding the 2019 Ukraine exchange. Please include communications to/from MOD, parliament/government ministers, Ukrainian government/Air Force, external sponsors and all other parties communicated with regarding the exchange.
4. All risk assessments undertaken for the exchange in 2019.
5. How these personnel were selected for the exchanges in all years.

I am also interested in the following information related to the RAF Air Cadets, also under Freedom of Information Act:

6. How Covid-19 has affected ACPS scholarships. How many scholarships have went ahead and are planned to go ahead? Will cadets who are not able to complete their scholarship this year be awarded a scholarship next year?
7. Information on why cadets selected for IACE 2020 will not be able to go on IACE 2021 if they have aged out (reached 20 years of age and are no longer a cadet) but remain as a CFAV. This is especially relevant as other cadet forces (CAP cadets remain cadets until 21 years old) allow cadets to remain as cadets at the age of 20 (and attend IACE).
8. Has allowing 20 year CFAVs fitting into the above criteria at 7 been considered? If so, why did it not go ahead?
9. All communications related to opening a Qualified Aerospace Instructors Course (QAIC) centre in Scotland or elsewhere in the UK?
10. If a Scottish QAIC centre (or a centre elsewhere in the UK) is planned to open, when will this happen and what measures have been taken (or will be taken) to contact current and former QAIC staff and cadets to assist with this.
11. Where was the equipment that was held in the RAF Linton-on-Ouse Regional Activity Centre (RAC) moved to upon its closure. If it has not yet been moved, where will it move to?
12. Where will the former QAIC north centre (based at RAF Linton-on-Ouse) relocate to for QAIC 13 and beyond? If this is not known, please highlight the locations being considered.

In your further e-mail of 27 June in response to our request for you to clarify your questions, you clarified that questions 1 – 5 were asking about an exchange programme to the Ukraine.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). A search for the information has now been completed and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to your request, which has been due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic and the effect on resources and necessary changes to our ways of working. It may be useful for you to be aware that during this time not all RAFAC personnel have had their usual access to Royal Air Force Air Cadet systems due to current restrictions in place.

#### Question 1

I can confirm that two cadets took part in the 2019 Ukraine Exchange programme, but there is no further information in scope of the request held by the Ministry of Defence.

#### Question 2.

For the 2019 Ukraine Exchange Programme two air fares totalling £444.84 and an overseas insurance premium of £11.30 for two cadets was paid using the Air Training Corps General Purpose Fund.

Information for the previous financial year is held by RAFAC but the MOD no longer hold the source information to enable a search of financial records to be undertaken.

#### Question 3,4 and 5

I can confirm that no information in scope of your request is held by the Ministry of Defence.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance), Questions 1 – 5, it may be helpful for you to know that, in accordance with Data Protection Act, all documents relating to the exchange trips, both paper and electronic, which are no longer required for a business need, have been deleted following the events.

#### Question 6.

There are 75 Air Cadet Pilot Scheme (ACPS) scholarships planned for financial year 2020/2021. No scholarships have been conducted in the current financial year as the ACPS year coincided with the cessation of all Cadet face to face activity in line with the government COVID 19 restrictions. The decision to extend the scholarship year will be determined by the RAFAC Senior Leadership Team once ACPS activity has been resumed.

#### Question 7

The International Air Cadets Exchange (IACE) is designed specifically for cadets within RAFAC who are aged 19 or under.

#### Question 8

RAFAC have not considered opening cadet places on IACE 21 to Civilian Force Adult Volunteers who were previously cadets within RAFAC as the programme is only available to cadets aged 19 or under.

#### Question 9

I can confirm that there is no information held by the Ministry of Defence in scope of your request

Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) Question 9, it may be helpful for you to be aware that, while there have been preliminary informal discussions relating to the possible opening of Qualified Aerospace Instructors Course (QAIC) within the UK, there have been no formal discussions or meetings recorded.

Question 10

With regard to Question 10, please note that Section 1 of the FOIA gives an applicant the right to access recorded information held by public authorities at the time the request is made. It does not require public authorities to answer questions, provide explanations or give opinions unless they are held on record.

Question 11 and 12

Information you have requested within Questions 11 and 12 falls within scope of the qualified exemption provided for at Section 35 (Formulation of Government Policy) and had been withheld

Section 35 is a qualified exemption and is subject to public interest testing, which means that the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure

Section 35(1)(a) has been applied to this information because it contains details of the development of the Air Cadets Organisations (ACO) Policy. It is important that ACO Senior Officials and advisers retain the ability to debate issues relating to policy formulation freely and in confidence, before reaching any decision. Disclosure would detract from the full and frank exchange of view that is necessary during policy formulation and would jeopardise the ability of the ACO Senior Officials to take decisions based on full advice and consideration of all the options. The exemption at Section 35 (1)(a) is designed to protect this ability. The balance of public interest was found to be in favour of withholding the information given that, overall, the public interest is best served in not releasing any details of the formulation of ACO Policy.

If you are not satisfied with this response or wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact us in the first instance at the address above. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto:CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk)). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>

Yours sincerely

Air Command Secretariat

Enc: Annex A