

Reference: 2025-043

Thank you for your email in which you requested the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA):

This is an information request relating to flights taken by staff in your organisation. Please include the following information for the following financial years 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25:

- **A list of all flights taken by employees and board members, including the following details:**
 - **The airline**
 - **The class (e.g. economy, business, first)**
 - **The departure airport and destination**
 - **The cost**
 - **The dates of travel**
 - **The name of the hotels stayed at, if possible**
 - **The cost of any other expenses.**

Response

The question in relation to 'all flights taken by employees and board members' and the breakdown of this data is extremely broad. While the SFO may hold some of the information you have requested, due to the scope of the question we are unable to provide a breakdown of the requested information as it is exempt under section 12 of the FOIA.

How the exemption is engaged

Under section 12 of the FOIA, a public authority does not have to comply with a request for information if complying with the request would exceed the appropriate cost limit, which has been set at £600. A flat rate of £25 per person, per hour, is given for determining whether information is held, finding and retrieving records and extracting the requested information. This means the appropriate limit of £600 will be exceeded if more than 24 hours are required to complete the work, which would be the case in this instance.

In relation to this request, please note that the information about staff air-travel and its breakdown is not held on a central system. To provide the level of details, particularly the breakdown of this data, would require a member of staff manually accessing old reports and compiling a spreadsheet for each entry. Therefore, the numbers of hours required to identify the requested information would exceed the time limit of 24 hours and this would be of disproportionate cost to the SFO.

For assistance, we sent you an email asking you if you would like to refine your request, which may enable us to gather information within the cost limit. For example, we would be able to process your request in relation to the Executive Committee specifically, which we deem would not engage section 12.

Section 12 is an absolute exemption and therefore does not require consideration of the public interest test.