

Reference: 2026-081

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

Please provide the following information for the period spanning from 01/01/26 to present day.

1 - Total Number: The total number of individuals currently or previously on secondment to your department from private sector companies within this timeframe.

2 - Company Names: The names of the specific private sector organisations/companies from which these individuals were seconded.

3 - Roles and Titles: The job title, role description, and the government department/division where each secondee was placed.

4 - Salary Responsibility: For each secondee, please clarify who is responsible for paying their salary (e.g., whether it is fully funded by the private sector employer, fully funded by your department, or co-funded/partially reimbursed).

Response

Question 1, 2, 3

The SFO holds this information. However, we are withholding this information under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Section 40(2) provides that personal data relating to a third party is exempt from disclosure if releasing it would contravene the data protection principles. In this case, disclosure would breach the first data protection principle, which requires that personal data be processed lawfully, fairly and transparently.

How the exemption is engaged

The SFO is a relatively small organisation, and the number of individuals on secondment from private sector during this period is very low. Disclosing the total number of staff on secondment would, when combined with other information reasonably available, create a realistic risk that individuals could be identified. This is of particular concern given the SFO's law enforcement function, where identifying staff and their designation could compromise their safety and security.

We also consider that disclosure would not constitute fair processing, since staff on secondment from private sector would have a reasonable expectation that this information would not be released in a way that could identify them.

Section 40(2) of the FOIA is an absolute exemption and we are therefore not required to consider the public interest in releasing the information requested.

Question 4

For the period covered by this request, staff on secondment to the SFO from private sector are not on the SFO payroll. They remain employed and paid by their seconding organisation, which invoices the SFO for associated costs.