



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Pakistan and Afghanistan Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

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

William Briggs
Via email: scotsjournalist@gmail.com

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14 August 2018

Dear Mr Briggs,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0704-18

Thank you for your email of 31 July asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

1 - Could you provide the total cost of Boris Johnson's visit to Afghanistan in June 2018 please with a full breakdown of his expenses. This should include the cost of cars, flights, hotels, meals and any other expenses incurred.

2 - Could you provide the total cost for all UK security personnel who accompanied Mr Johnson on his trip to Afghanistan on the June 2018 trip. This should include cost of flights, meals, cars and any other expenses that security personnel incurred. Could you provide a detailed breakdown of these costs please.

3 - Could you provide the total cost for private/personal staff who accompanied Mr Johnson on his trip to Afghanistan on the June 2018 trip. This should include cost of flights, meals, cars and any other expenses incurred. Could you provide a detailed breakdown of these costs please.

4 - Could you provide Mr Johnson's official itinerary for the above trip please?

5 - Can you specify exactly when Mr Johnson left the UK and when he arrived back in Britain please?

6 - Can you say when the above trip was first discussed please and provide documentation for the initial discussion as evidence?

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) holds some information relevant to your request. The former Foreign Secretary's visit took place ahead of a National Security Council (NSC) discussion on Afghanistan. Following the recent ceasefires in Afghanistan, and with elections due later this year, this was also a timely opportunity to show support for recent positive developments and to take stock of progress and the UK's supportive role in providing peace and stability to Afghanistan (full details can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-flies-into-kabul-to-support-signs-of-progress-in-afghanistan).

Regarding your first question, this information is subject to exemption under section 22 (information intended for future publication) of the FOIA. Information on Ministerial travel that falls within the scope of your request is intended for future publication. This information will be published in due course on the FCO website, and will be accessible at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/minister-data>

Section 22 of the FOIA is a qualified exemption which is subject to the public interest test. We have considered the public interest in releasing the information against the interest of withholding it:

There is a public interest in demonstrating transparency by releasing the information with this reply. However, we can also achieve transparency by the Government publishing this information on the FCO website.

There is a public interest in government departments providing information they hold that falls within the scope of a freedom of information request as quickly as possible. However, we need to balance this with the public interest in government ensuring the maximum cost effectiveness. Providing this information in response to a Freedom of Information request 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 in our response to your request outweighs the public interest in releasing it.

For your second question, following a search of our records, we have established that this Department does not hold the information relevant to your request.

Regarding your third question, please find below the costs that this Department holds as of the date of your request for the staff who accompanied the former foreign secretary on his visit to Afghanistan. Because these costs are not disclosed as part of transparency data releases, unlike the costs for Ministers, the consideration of whether this is the most cost effective way to disclose this information does not apply here.

Breakdown of costs for officials

Type of cost				
Commercial Flights	£6322	x3	Sub total	£18,966
Visas	£200	x2	Sub total	£400
Meals	£0	x3	Sub total	£0
Accommodation	£0	x3	Sub total	£0
Cars	£0	x3	Sub total	£0
			Total	£19,366

Regarding your fourth question. Please find attached as an annex to this letter the itinerary for the visit. Some of the information in this itinerary, identifiers of those who attended individual meetings, is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances sections 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this principle, which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Some of the other information within the itinerary, and the information you have requested for your fifth and sixth questions, has been withheld under Section 38 (1) - Health and Safety- of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 38 is a qualified exemption, which means that it is subject to a public interest test.

We acknowledge that there is some public interest in disclosing the information. Releasing such information would demonstrate openness and public accountability towards the former Foreign Secretary's official travel. However, we balanced these against the grounds for non-disclosure, which, in this instance, includes the risk of undermining personal safety and security measures for visits of this nature. Details released could be used by others in the future to pose a significant risk to any individual's personal safety during similar visits. On balance, we concluded that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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 in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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If you would like a review of our decision, or if you wish to make a complaint, please write to the Central FOI Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Room WH2.177, King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AH. E-mail: foi-dpa.pmcs@fco.gov.uk. You have 40 working days to do so from the date of this letter.

You can apply directly to the Information Commissioner. However, the Information Commissioner will not normally make a decision unless you have first exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the FCO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

Pakistan and Afghanistan Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.

Annex A- VIP VISIT TO KABUL PROGRAMME

Time	Venue	Meeting/event	Attendees
0735-0740	[]	Welsh Guards Handshake	VIP, [] DF, HMA, []
0750-0800	[]	Freshen up	VIP, [], DF
0800-0835	[]	Breakfast	VIP, [], DF, HMA, DCOM, DHM, [], [], [], [], []
0845-0930	[]	Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah	VIP, [], DF, HMA, []
0950-1010	[]	All Staff Address	VIP, [], DF, HMA
1015-1045	[]	Girls Education Event	VIP, [], DF, HMA, [], [], [], [], [], []
1100-1210	[]	President Ashraf Ghani -	VIP, [], DF, HMA, []
1230-1345	[]	Lunch with Dep Foreign Minister Hekmat Karzai	VIP, [], DF, HMA, []
1400-1445	[]	General John Nicholson, Commander Resolute Support	VIP, [], DF, HMA, [], []
[]	[]	Depart []	VIP, [], DF, []