

Jerry Page, FCMA
Financial & Estate
Management

22 Whitehall Kirkland House
London SW1A 2WH
Telephone 020 7276 6150
Fax 020 7276 6101
Email jerry.page@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk
Web www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk

15th December 2008

Dear Mr Bimmler

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST; REFERENCE FOI260342

I refer to your email dated 21 November 2008 (Reference 4308-a1bfe430) in which you ask, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, information regarding the provision and use of handheld devices such as Blackberry's, I Phones or similar to Ministers and other senior staff.

I should first explain that I am only able to provide information in respect of the Cabinet Office. For similar information regarding other departments; you will need to contact them direct.

Turning to the questions you have raised:

Ministers and officials are entitled to the use of a mobile phone or other handheld device such as a blackberry or I Phone, where this is necessary to enable them to carry out official business. The exact type will depend upon the individual's specific requirements. Information regarding the number supplied and the terms of the different types is not held centrally and the Cabinet Office has estimated that it will cost more than the appropriate limit to consider your request for this information. The appropriate limit is specified in regulations and for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3 1/2 working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Consequently, the department is not obliged by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to comply with your request for that information (see section 12(1)).

The department will only pay for the rental and work related use of any officially provided mobile phone or other handheld device. Costs of any personal use must be borne by the individual user themselves. Bills for mobile phones and other handheld devices contracted to the Cabinet Office are itemised and individuals must agree with their line manager what use is work-related and what is personal; and therefore what must be paid for by the individual. I should also explain that similar rules also apply where an individual uses their own, personal, mobile phone or handheld device to carry out official business; the department will refund the individual for work related use.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.



If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request or wish to request an internal review, you should write, again referring to the above reference to:

Sue Gray
Director
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

email: foiteam@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by Cabinet Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours faithfully

JERRY PAGE