



Immigration
Enforcement

Immigration Enforcement Secretariat
Sandford House
41 Homer Road
Solihull
B91 3QJ

Hanna Rullmann
[request-710730-
1913f550@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-710730-1913f550@whatdotheyknow.com)

www.gov.uk/home-office

Wednesday 7 April 2021

Dear Ms Rullmann,

Re: Freedom of Information Request – 61517

Thank you for your email correspondence of 3 December 2020, in which you asked for information regarding the number of, and cost of, each Home Office Charter flight operated in 2020. Your request, which can be found in full at Annex A, is being handled as request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Firstly, I would like to apologise for the delay in replying to your correspondence.

On 6 January, we wrote to advise you that we required additional time to consider your request as the information which you have requested is being considered under the exemption in section 31 of the FOIA, which relates to law enforcement.

We are now able to provide a reply to your request, please refer to Annex B.

If you are dissatisfied with this response to your Freedom of Information request you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk, quoting reference FOI **61517**. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request would be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you were to remain dissatisfied after an internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the FOIA.

Yours sincerely,

Immigration Enforcement Secretariat
ImmigrationEnforcementFOIPQ@homeoffice.gov.uk

Freedom of Information Request – 61517

Annex A

From: H Rullmann <request-710730-1913f550@whatdotheyknow.com>
Sent: 03 December 2020 12:31
To: FOI Requests <FOIRequests@homeoffice.gov.uk>
Subject: 61517 - Freedom of Information request - Cost of deportation flights 2020

Dear Home Office,

This letter is to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please disclose the following:

- The total cost of each flight chartered by the Home Office for the purpose of deporting and/or administratively removing people from the UK, for the year 2020 so far (up until today, December 3rd, 2020).
- The number of people removed on each of these flights.

Yours faithfully,

Hanna Rullmann

Please use this email address for all replies to this request:
request-710730-1913f550@whatdotheyknow.com

1. The total cost of each flight chartered by the Home Office for the purpose of deporting and/or administratively removing people from the UK, for the year 2020 so far (up until today, December 3rd, 2020).

A: I can confirm that the Home Office holds the information that you have requested. However, after careful consideration, we have decided that the information is exempt from disclosure under Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 43(2) provides that information can be withheld if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person.

Section 43(2) of the Act is a qualified exemption and requires consideration of the public interest test. Arguments for and against disclosure in terms of the public interest with the reasons for our conclusion, are set out as follows.

Considerations in favour of disclosing the information

Disclosure of this information into the public domain would provide transparency on how much the Home Office spends on returns charter flights. There will be a public interest in this disclosure to ensure transparency in the Home Office's use of public funds and in maintaining accountability to taxpayers.

Considerations in favour maintaining the exemptions

We have considered the public interest there may be in maintaining the exemption and not providing you with the information requested.

There is a public interest in the Home Office being able to secure charter aircraft contracts that represent value for money. Anything that would undermine this and undermine our ability to return foreign national offenders and immigration offenders in the future is clearly not in the public interest.

Value for money can be best obtained where there is a healthy competitive environment, coupled with the protection of Government's commercial relationships with industry. Were this not the case, there would be a risk that:

- Companies would be discouraged from dealing with the public sector, fearing disclosure of information that may damage them commercially (such as providing an insight into their pricing structures that competitors may use) or
- Companies would withhold information where possible, making the choice of the best contractor more uncertain as it would be based on limited and censored data.
- Likewise, when undertaking any competitive tendering process, releasing the value of the current contract (albeit indirectly) would weaken the Home Office's position to re-tender contracts in a competitive environment.

Conclusion

We conclude that the considerations in favour of maintaining the exemptions outweigh those in favour of disclosing the information, and therefore that the balance of the public interest lies in withholding the information requested.

2. The number of people removed on each of these flights.

A: Please find the number of people removed on each flight in 2020, up to 3 December 2020 in the following table.

Charter Flight Date	*Number removals
29/01/2020	7
30/01/2020	4
11/02/2020	17
20/02/2020	11
26/02/2020	12
30/04/2020	33
21/05/2020	50
28/05/2020	47
10/06/2020	50
12/06/2020	4
17/06/2020	50
30/06/2020	51
09/07/2020	50
23/07/2020	20
29/07/2020	42
06/08/2020	23
12/08/2020	14
26/08/2020	12
03/09/2020	11
09/09/2020	13
15/09/2020	14
22/09/2020	12
24/09/2020	3
29/09/2020	11

01/10/2020	1
06/10/2020	12
08/10/2020	14
13/10/2020	13
15/10/2020	10
22/10/2020	5
29/10/2020	14
03/11/2020	3
04/11/2020	20
05/11/2020	6
10/11/2020	8
12/11/2020	22
17/11/2020	16
19/11/2020	21
24/11/2020	24
26/11/2020	20
02/12/2020	13

* Please note that these figures have not been audited to National Audit Office standards and are derived from provisional internal management information that is subject to revision.