



UK Visas
& Immigration

Freedom of Information
Central Correspondence Team
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Services
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Melanie Newham

Email:

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www.gov.uk/ukvi

FOI Reference: 76011

23 May 2023

Dear Ms Newham

Thank you for your enquiry of 26 April. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Information Requested

I wish to enquire about the costs of housing asylum seekers on military bases. Suella Braverman stated on TV this morning that it was costing £6m per day and that there were approximately 40000 people which works out to be approximately £150 per person, per day. What is the expected cost per person, per day once they have been moved to a military base?

Response

The information you are seeking is not being disclosed, pursuant to the exemption under section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 43(2) allows us to exempt information if its disclosure would, or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any persons. If we were to disclose the information to you, this would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of both the Home Office and those companies with whom the Home Office enters into contracts.

This exemption requires us to consider whether, in every respect the public interest in maintaining the exemption stated above, outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Please find our arguments for and against disclosure in the Annex below.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, 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 76011. 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 will be reassessed by staff not involved in providing you with this response. If you remain dissatisfied after this internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

A link to the Home Office Information Rights Privacy Notice can be found in the following link. This explains how we process your personal information:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-rights-privacy-notice

Yours sincerely

J Jones
Customer Operations Support Services

We value your feedback, please use the link below to access a brief anonymous survey to help us improve our service to you:
www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/s/108105TAZNG

Annex

Some of the exemptions in the FOIA, referred to as 'qualified' exemptions, are subject to a public interest test (PIT). This test is used to balance the public interest in disclosure against the public interest in maintaining the exemption. We must carry out a PIT where we are considering using any of the qualified exemptions in response to a request for information.

The 'public interest' is not necessarily the same as what interests the public. In carrying out a PIT we consider the greater good or benefit to the community as a whole if the information is released or not. Transparency and the 'right to know' must be balanced against the need to enable effective government and to serve the best interests of the public.

The FOIA is 'applicant blind.' This means that we cannot, and do not, ask about the motives of anyone who asks for information. In providing a response to one person, we are expressing a willingness to provide the same response to anyone.

Considerations in favour of disclosing the information

We have considered the public interest in disclosing the information to you. There will be a public interest in immediate disclosure to ensure that there is full transparency in the Home Office's use of public funds and in particular to maintain the Home Office's accountability to taxpayers. Disclosure of this information would also enable the public to assess whether or not the Home Office is getting best value for money in terms of its contracts.

Considerations in favour maintaining the exemption

We have also considered the public interest in maintaining the exemption. There is a public interest in Government departments being able to secure contracts that represent value for money and anything that would undermine this is not in the public interest. Value for money can be best obtained where there is a healthy competitive environment, coupled with protection of the Government's commercial relationships with industry, were this is not the case, there would be a risk that:

- Companies would be discouraged from dealing with the public sector, fearing disclosure of information that might damage them commercially, 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.

Disclosure of costs or estimates provided in the course of a contract is likely to damage the relationship between the Home Office and its service provider as it will put them at a competitive disadvantage. Competitors will have access to accommodation information that they would not otherwise be able to view because it is required as part of the contract arrangements.

Conclusion

We have therefore concluded that the balance of public interests identified lies in favour of maintaining the exemption. This is because the overall public interest lies in ensuring that the Home Office's ability to protect its commercial competitiveness and relationships with its current service providers is not prejudiced.