

Department of Energy & Climate Change

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Our ref: 12/0304

16th March 2012

Freedom of Information Request

Thank you for your e-mail dated 23rd February further clarifying your initial enquiry of 8th February requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

You requested details of expenditure incurred from May 2010 to-date by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and its Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) on:

- Wine and other alcohol; and
- Bottled water.

Core DECC:

Wine and alcohol: The Department's finance system does not record expenditure on (i) wine, or (ii) other alcoholic drinks separately from general refreshments. To identify this information the Department would need to review each individual expense claim and invoice for refreshments, entertaining, and hospitality since May 2010, which would incur disproportionate cost. It is possible that some expenditure may have been incurred as part of hospitality provided to third parties such as foreign dignitaries. The Department's policy on hospitality requires that:

- Directors-General take personal responsibility for ensuring that an effective system is in place within their business areas for dealing with hospitality expenditure;
- all expenditure must be fully and properly authorised and accounted for;
- there must be a clear and justifiable reason for expenditure on hospitality i.e. where there is direct Government interest in promoting the Department);
- the nature of the hospitality should not be excessive to the purpose for which it is given;
- the number of members of the Department present should be reasonable in relation to the nature of the occasion; and
- personal benefit to the participating staff must be incidental and, where relevant, abated by adjustment of any claims for subsistence.

Bottled water: DECC operates out of 3 buildings – 3 Whitehall Place, 55 Whitehall in London and Atholl House in Aberdeen. In the London buildings drinking water is mains-fed chilled filtered tap

water so bottled water is not purchased. At present, in the Aberdeen building, which has around 80 members of staff, bottled water is used for meetings held with external visitors. Since May 2010 the Department's expenditure on bottled water was £1,110.

DECC NDPBs:

Wine and alcohol: As with the core Department, the Department's Non Departmental Public Bodies do not record expenditure on wine or other alcoholic drinks separately from general refreshments. To identify relevant expenditure since May 2010 would incur disproportionate costs. Any such expenditure is incurred in accordance with local hospitality policies which are designed to ensure hospitality is moderate, appropriate and properly approved.

Bottled water: Since May 2010:

- the Coal Authority has spent approximately £245 on bottled water; and
- the Civil Nuclear Police Authority has spent £15k to-date on bottled water, (including annual rental for bottled water drinking dispensers and recyclable plastic cups).

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and Committee on Climate Change do not record expenditure on bottled water separately from expenditure on other forms of refreshments.

Summary of water expenditure

Organisation	Bottled Water (May 2010 to-date)
DECC (Aberdeen)	£1,110
Coal Authority	£245
Civil Nuclear Police	£15,035
Nuclear Decommissioning Agency	Not available
Committee on Climate Change	Not available

Appeal Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to the department. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely