



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

Foreign Secretary's Office  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

6 January 2017

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 1120-16**

Thank you for your email of 5 December 2016 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*Please could I have a list of gifts given to foreign politicians and officials by FCO ministers since July 14 this year.*

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

FCO ministers give gifts only when diplomatic protocol or cultural context makes it appropriate. Gifts are typically inexpensive items such as tea, ties or cufflinks.

We are not obliged under Section 21 of the Act to provide information that is reasonably accessible by other means. Any gifts given valued at over £140 for the period 14 July-30 September are recorded and published as part of the FCO's ministerial quarterly return, are available at [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=foreign-commonwealth-office&publication\\_type=transparency-data](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=foreign-commonwealth-office&publication_type=transparency-data).

For the period 1 October-5 December, this information is being withheld under section 22 (information intended for future publication) of the FOIA. This information will be published in due course on the FCO website, at the link provided above.

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 an FOI 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.

Gifts given valued below £140 are not consistently recorded. The Foreign Secretary has on occasion given out copies of his books as personal gifts – he purchases these himself.

Yours sincerely,

Foreign Secretary's 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.