



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Human Resources Directorate**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

09 October 2017

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0776-17**

Thank you for your email of 11 August asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*Please provide a list of the members of staff seconded to the Office of the Quartet Representative/ the Office of Tony Blair since 2007.*

*In each case please provide the name of the member of staff, the department/desk from which they were seconded, the exact dates of the secondment, the grade of the member of staff and a job description for their Quartet role.*

*Please also provide the name and dates of any members of staff given paid or unpaid leave to join the Office of the Quartet Representative/Office of Tony Blair.*

*In addition, I would be grateful if you could provide a copy of the department's policy/guidelines on secondments.*

*I recognise that there are legitimate reasons for withholding the names of junior members of staff, which I do not dispute. However all the above information, with the exception of their names, should be provided in their cases too.*

*I also recognise that the names of any of the individuals constitute personal data, but it is fair to disclose this data for non-junior staff members.*

*There are no obvious or immediate consequences that would occur from the information being disclosed, given that the work, for example, of Nick Banner, Gavin Mackay and Gareth Bayley for the FCO, has been put into the public domain already either by the individuals concerned or the FCO.*

*Given their seniority, each would also have had a reasonable expectation that such information may be released, for example in parliamentary answers, in published guestlists of events they have attended (as is the case), or, indeed, as a result of media of freedom of information requests.*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

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

The FCO provided the following members of staff to the Office of the Quartet Representative from 2007- 2013:

- One Senior Civil Servant from July 2007 until April 2010, as Chief of Staff to the Quartet Representative. This role was filled by two different FCO officers, first Nick Banner until February 2009, and subsequently Gareth Bayley.
- One Grade 6 equivalent from March 2010 to June 2013 as Senior Adviser to the Quartet Representative, Tony Blair.
- One Grade 7 equivalent from July 2007 to August 2009, as Deputy Chief of Staff to the Quartet Representative, Tony Blair.
- One HEO equivalent from August 2007 to August 2010, as Private Secretary to the Quartet Representative, Tony Blair.
- One EO equivalent from September 2010 to August 2012 as Desk Officer, Office of the Quartet Representative. This role was filled by two different FCO officers in succession.
- One AO equivalent from September 2012 until June 2013 as Desk Officer, Officer of the Quartet Representative.

The officers were seconded from the Middle East and North Africa Directorate. We do not hold job descriptions for these roles on file.

One FCO officer (Nick Banner) took unpaid leave to work for Tony Blair from February 2009 to July 2010.

Like all Civil Servants, FCO officers on secondment are bound by the Civil Service Code. Under section 21 of the FOIA, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to you. The Civil Service Code is published on gov.uk at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-code/the-civil-service-code>

Some of the information you have requested is personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In this case, the information concerned relates to names of staff in the Delegated Grades. In such circumstances sections 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this principle, which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, s.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Yours sincerely,

## Human Resources Directorate



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.