

Freedom of Information Request: HSE response

Thank you for your request for a range of information about the travel and expenses costs and other specified forms of expenditure incurred by the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Chief Executive and Senior Management Team members. Your request was received on 9 April 2009 and as our e-mail acknowledging it confirmed, I am dealing with it under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

Your questions, with our responses, are provided in annex A to this note. Attached to our e-mail, as annex B, is a spreadsheet which provides the supporting detail to your questions 1 – 3; and annex C, which provides the supporting detail to questions 4 and 5.

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If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the decisions made by HSE you may ask for an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter by writing to me.

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:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545700
Fax: 01625 524510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk
Website: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>

Annex A

Questions and Responses

Your questions are reproduced below. For your convenience, we have 'grouped' some of them for the purposes of presenting the detailed supporting data in tabular form in annexes B and C.

Q1: provide a breakdown of the total amount spent by the HSE on overnight accommodation in Liverpool/North West for the Chief Executive and all HSE Senior Management Team over the past 12 months (broken down by member and month)?

Q2: provide a breakdown of total amount spend by the HSE on travel /transport costs for visits to Liverpool/North West for the Chief Executive and all HSE Senior Management Team over the past 12 months (broken down by member and month)?

Q3: provide a breakdown of the total amount claimed for subsistence for visits to Liverpool / North West for the Chief Executive and all HSE Senior Management Team for the past 12 months (broken down by Board Member and month).

R: these questions have been grouped together and the information relevant to each is provided in annex B. To put these figures into context, the cost of moving the SMT to the North West is only a small element of the overall How and Where We Work (HWWW) Programme. The HWWW business case includes potential savings in the range of £55m to £67m over the ten-year period and significant savings (£250k in 2009/10 increasing to £500k in 2010/11 and then £750k for each year thereafter) related to reduced travel between Rose Court and Bootle.

Q4: the total number of meals eaten in restaurants or clubs, paid for by HSE, for the Chief Executive, and the median average cost per meal (including drinks where claimed), and the highest price ever paid for a meal for the Chief Executive over the last 12 months.

Q5: the total number of times that the Chief Executive has taken another member of the Senior Management Team to lunch or dinner and paid on expenses (or vice versa), and the median average cost per meal (including drinks where claimed), and the highest price ever paid over the last 12 months.

R: these questions have been grouped together and the information relevant to each is provided in annex C.

Q6: Whether any of the Senior Management Team have claimed on expenses for portable media players (e.g. iPod or similar), and if so how much has been claimed for such players and by whom, over the last five years.

R: a search of HSE's central accounting system and checks by HSE's directorates and divisions did not reveal any record of claims under expenses by members of the Senior Management Team for portable media players over the last five years.

Q7: how much has been spent on pastries, sandwiches and refreshments for meetings attended by Senior Management Team members or Chief Executive over the last 12 months.

R: the provision of pastries, sandwiches and refreshments as working lunches for meetings attended by the Senior Management Team (SMT), Chief Executive (CE) or staff at all levels are properly charged to a wide range of budgets across HSE determined by who organises the meeting and pays for the refreshments etc. Also, the procedures for arranging refreshments at such meetings would not need to specify routinely whether a member of the SMT or CE was an attendee. The data is therefore not in a readily accessible form and would involve HSE in disproportionate cost (in excess of the £600 threshold referred to in the Freedom of Information Act) to attempt to compile a detailed a response to this question. However, the typical cost of working lunches in HSE's Headquarters, Redgrave Court, is £5.00 per person plus £1.50 for tea, coffee and biscuits.