



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Our Ref: Fol/Req/17/173

28 September 2017

Dear Ms McSorley,

I refer to your recent request for information, made under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, in which you requested the following:

- 1. The number of civil servants 'housed' in Notting Hill in Belfast between the years 2012 and 2017, broken down by year and job title.*
- 2. The visitor log of Notting Hill from 2012-2017*
- 3. Function and events calendar from 2012-2017. This should include details such as the name/title of the function, duration of event, number of invited guests, what member of the government was present, and what hospitality (if any) was provided.*

I refer also to the acknowledgment for your request which was sent to you on 15th September 2017 and the subsequent conversation you had with my colleague Niamh Kelpie concerning your request.

I am the responding officer for this request. I have identified four records which fall under the scope of your request as set out in the schedule of records below. I have decided to refuse access to all four records.

Schedule of Records

Records	Description	Granted/part-granted/refused	Section exempted under
1-4	Register of official functions held at Notting Hill 2014 and earlier 2015 2016 2017	Refused	33 (i) (c)

With regard to part one of your request, the residence at Notting Hill is the official residence of the Irish Joint Secretary, no other civil servants reside there.

With regard to part 2 of your request I am refusing this under Section 15(1) (a) of the FOI Act- refusal on administrative grounds to grant FOI requests as the record does not exist.

With regard to part 3 of your request I have identified four records falling under the scope of your request. After consideration of the records I have made the decision to refuse the release of these records by virtue of the exemptions identified under the following sections *Security, Defence and International Relations 33(1) (c)-matters relating to Northern Ireland.*

My decision is informed by consideration of the potential for the release of these records to adversely affect the conduct of the Government's work for peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland. This Department operates in a complex, diverse environment. Release of Records 1-4 could reasonably be expected to adversely affect matters relating to Northern Ireland, could harm the ability of the Department to fulfil its functions and substantially impair good working relationships established between this administration and our interlocutors. I consider this would prejudice the future supply of information required for the effective conduct of our work on matters relating to Northern Ireland. On balance I have decided to refuse access to the records.

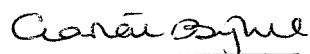
Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 or by email to foi@dfa.ie. A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at foi@dfa.ie, or +353 1-4082857.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this decision, please contact me at 028-90383715.

Yours sincerely



Ciarán Byrne
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Belfast Office