

Reference:1896477

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

16 October 2024

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about business flights.

We received this request on 18 September 2024 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOI Act”).

Your request and our response

Please provide both the number flight bookings (seats) and amount spent on flights by your organisation for business purposes from 1st January 2019 - 1st July 2024, split by month of departure if possible.

If data is recorded in such a way that you can provide, please split by seat class (ie. economy, premium economy, business, first) and employment grade.

Happy to receive a list of flights with requested information if that is easier for you to provide.

We have searched for the information you have requested and can confirm that we hold some information falling within the scope of your request.

Please see below the data we are able to provide by financial year.

		Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	2024/25
Standard/Economy Class	# of flights	75	69	93	86									323
	Cost	£19,826	£24,796	£20,664	£17,539									£82,824
Business Class	# of flights	10	9	7	11									37
	Cost	£30,788	£27,049	£27,951	£28,464									£114,252
Total	# of flights	85	78	100	97									360
	Cost	£50,614	£51,845	£48,614	£46,003									£197,076

		Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	2023/24
Standard/Economy Class	# of flights	189	238	277	148	112	200	210	161	79	151	174	191	2,130
	Cost	£25,840	£34,363	£32,764	£28,061	£18,189	£25,551	£25,844	£25,885	£10,305	£11,948	£18,392	£33,733	£290,875
Business Class	# of flights	20	14	11	6	2	2	9	43	2	4	6	8	127
	Cost	£21,936	£22,526	£21,283	£25,942	£6,140	£5,882	£9,295	£68,647	£5,476	£12,893	£12,933	£29,519	£242,473
Total	# of flights	209	252	288	154	114	202	219	204	81	155	180	199	2,257
	Cost	£47,776	£56,889	£54,047	£54,003	£24,329	£31,433	£35,139	£94,532	£15,781	£24,841	£31,325	£63,252	£533,348

		Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	2022/23
Standard/Economy Class	# of flights	87	153	141	82	26	190	153	190	75	92	108	121	1,418
	Cost	£10,185	£26,798	£20,173	£13,013	£5,328	£21,066	£24,315	£44,022	£9,791	£12,063	£16,990	£25,942	£229,686
Business Class	# of flights	2	18	14	24	6	7	1	12				18	102
	Cost	£8,177	£33,660	£5,996	£28,889	£8,960	£13,076	£15,5	£7,773				£34,307	£140,995
Total	# of flights	89	171	155	106	32	197	154	202	75	92	108	139	1,520
	Cost	£18,361	£60,458	£26,170	£41,902	£14,289	£34,141	£24,470	£51,795	£9,791	£12,063	£16,990	£60,250	£370,680

		Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	2021/22
Standard/Economy Class	# of flights					2	7	19	93	31		27	50	229
	Cost					£511	£1,993	£2,609	£15,699	£3,379		£3,633	£11,777	£39,601
Business Class	# of flights													0
	Cost													£0
Total	# of flights	0	0	0	0	2	7	19	93	31	0	27	50	229
	Cost	£0	£0	£0	£0	£511	£1,993	£2,609	£15,699	£3,379	£0	£3,633	£11,777	£39,601

Please find below data we are able to provide which includes pre 2020/21.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Domestic	£112,530	£122,986	-£956	£13,721	£87,767	£136,205
International	£255,314	£279,959	-£6,623	£25,880	£282,913	£397,143
Air	£367,844	£402,945	-£7,579	£39,601	£370,680	£533,348

By way of explanation there was no air travel in 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and refunds of £7,579 were received for flights booked and paid for before March 2020. Moreover, setting up new regimes including Telecommunication Security and Online Safety has required increased international travel as the companies regulated under these legislations are largely based outside the UK. You may find it helpful to know that our expenses policy provides that business class travel is permitted only for long-haul flights (6 hours+), where travel is overnight, or where a colleague is starting work immediately after the journey.

We are unable to provide a breakdown of the number of flights, departure month and class of travel pre 2020/21, or the breakdown by employment grade for any time period. This information is not readily accessible as it is either held on old systems or not held by our travel provider and would require manual calculations. Section 12 of the FOI Act provides that a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the “appropriate limit”. The appropriate limit is set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, and is, for Ofcom, £450. That sum is intended to cover the estimated costs involved in determining whether Ofcom holds the information requested, identifying, locating, retrieving and extracting the information from any document containing it. The Regulations provide that costs are to be estimated at a rate of £25 per person per hour. Ofcom estimates that it would take at least 18 hours to identify, locate and extract breakdown information pre 2020/21 and provide the employee grade of those travelling and as such the cost of complying with these elements of your request will exceed the appropriate limit.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries - please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk – quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Information Requests

Request an internal review

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your request for information, or think that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you do, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will either uphold the original decision, or reverse or modify it.

If you would like to ask us to carry out an internal review, you should get in touch within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for us to complete our internal review, and the time it takes will depend on the complexity of the request. But we will try to complete the review within 20 working days (or no more than 40 working days in exceptional cases) and keep you informed of our progress. Please email the Information Requests team (information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) to request an internal review.

Taking it further

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our internal review, then you have the right to [complain to the Information Commissioner's Office](#).