

Question:

Under Freedom of Information regulations I would like to know:-

Please provide a breakdown of conferences, visits and trips to locations outside the UK and Ireland involving the minister during the last 12 months - the 2025 calendar year.

Please state the:

1. Date
2. Location (city and country)
3. Number of travellers (state in each case the number of senior civil servants and whether it included the minister)
4. Reason for the conference/visit/trip
5. The name and star rating of the hotel which was used by travellers.
6. A full breakdown of costs for the conference/trip/visit, to include the costs of travel, hotel/accommodation and subsistence (food/drinks).

Response:

1. Dates 11 – 17 March 2025.
2. Location: Washington DC, USA.
3. 3 Travellers in total which included the Minister, Minister's Special Advisor and Minister's Private Secretary.
4. To attend a number of events including a dinner on the invitation of Queens University Belfast. During the trip a number of other pre-arranged visits/meetings took place as follows: SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), WHO (World Health Organisation), a meeting with researchers on Population Health and Health Equities at Georgetown University; a visit to the ED at George Washington University Hospital. on their research on Population Health. Minister attended a number of other events being hosted that week including one to support NICVA alongside a number of breakfast functions organised via the NI Bureau in Washington. All of the visits/meetings and events provided the Minister with the opportunity to engage on Health relevant matters, share experiences and best practice.

5. The River Inn, Foggy Bottom, Georgetown, Washington DC (4 STAR)
6. Cost per person for travel and accommodation £2326.50 (Flight £556.50; Accommodation £1770); Transport in the USA total: £367.74; £256.91 (food/drinks total bill for 3 persons across the duration of the trip).

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