



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

29 July 2013

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0633-13

Thank you for your email of 3 July 2013 asking for the Department's annual expenditure on the following for the last three years:

- 1) Online advertising;
- 2) Facebook advertising; and
- 3) Twitter advertising.

We conducted a search of the paper and electronic records held by three FCO Directorates in London: Human Resources (HR), Consular and Communications & Engagement (CED).

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does hold information falling within the terms of your request. We are able to make some of this available related to centrally-held data. However, we do not hold detailed information from our network of posts overseas centrally. Retrieval of this information would exceed the cost limit.

In respect of centrally-held data, since 2010 there has been a marketing and advertising freeze (MAF) in place at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Exceptions can be made:

- Consular Directorate has delegated authority to clear their own exceptions;
- recruitment advertising (handled by HR) is exempt from the freeze;
- all other exceptions must be cleared through the Director of CED.

I therefore attach the information that we hold centrally for these three Directorates:

2010/11

Directorate	Item	Amount
HR	Recruitment Campaign (online)	£75,490.84
HR	Recruitment Campaign (Facebook)	£777.45
CED	Europe Directorate: Online marketing campaign to gain representation in the European Union	£23,000.00
CED	Public Diplomacy & Strategic Campaigns Group: Supporting Embassies in the Middle East using Facebook promotions to boost numbers of followers. (Nov 2010)	£2,000.00
CED	Public Diplomacy & Strategic Campaigns Group:	£20,000.00

	Facebook advertisements for Middle East posts – To increase the number of fans on Middle East and North African Embassy facebook pages from 20,000 to 150,000 by June 2011. As a wave of change swept the region we needed to boost our presence to influence events and position the UK advantageously (Feb 2011)	
CED	Digital Diplomacy Department: Facebook advertising (Mar 2011)	£2,000.00
		£123,268.29

2011/12

Directorate	Item	Amount
HR	Recruitment Campaign (online)	£45,882.95
		£45,882.95

2012/13

Directorate	Item	Amount
HR	Recruitment Campaign (online)	£88,648.00
CED	Promoting the Travel Advice Facebook page	£100.00
CED	Outreach to gap year students through Campus magazine (an online publication)	£900.00
CED	South Asia Group: Facebook advertising. Pakistan	£100.00
		£89,748.00

In regard to data not held centrally, Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit. The limit has been specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. For central government the appropriate limit is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 3½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it. Your request as presently formulated is widely-framed and would necessitate a search covering the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's worldwide network and all thematic and geographical departments in London. I estimate that it will take more than 3½ working days to locate, retrieve and extract this information. In these circumstances we are not obliged under the Act to comply with your request. However if you narrowed your request to a specific Post, geographical area or department in London this may bring the request within the cost limit.