



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Protocol Directorate**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

22 June 2015

Dear,

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REFERENCE: 0488-15**

Thank you for your email of 22 May 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*Please provide me with the names of the ten diplomatic missions/international organisations that have the most financial penalties logged against them for outstanding parking fines combined with fines logged against them that were later waived by councils for the entire period covering the five years to the end of 2013. Please state the name of the mission/organisation and the total in fines against it which are either outstanding or has now been waived.*

We are writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

We can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

With respect to parking fines, we expect all diplomatic missions, international organisations and individual diplomats to settle their fines. It is the responsibility of individual councils and Transport for London (TfL), which own such debts, to maintain details of parking fines and to pursue diplomatic missions, international organisations and individual diplomats for payment of fines, or to waive them if appropriate. The role of the FCO with respect to this matter is to help councils and TfL monitor and pursue persistent offenders, and we remind routinely diplomatic missions and international organisations of their obligations under international law to pay fines and outstanding debts.

Some of the information which we hold and which is relevant to your request is, in our view, already reasonably accessible to you in that, every year, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs makes Written Ministerial Statements (WMS) to Parliament on

parking fines, National Non-Domestic Rates, London Congestion Charge debts and serious offences which have allegedly been committed by members of the diplomatic community in the UK. Under Section 21 of the FoI Act (Information Accessible by Other Means), we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to the applicant. The last such statements made on 15 July 2014 gave the details for the calendar year 2013, and can be found on the [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk) website [here](#). Similar statements covering parking fines covering the calendar years [2012](#), [2011](#), [2010](#) and [2009](#) can be found on the same website (hyperlinks attached).

Regarding the information requested about parking fines later waived by individual councils and TfL, it is possible that we may hold some relevant information but searching for it would require us to check and analyse every such notification received and stored electronically and on paper since 2010. In addition it is likely that our records of such transactional details for every council and TfL since 2010 are incomplete, or have been weeded in the intervening period, which would lead to us providing you with inaccurate answers about fines waived. We estimate that the cost of searching our archives for this information, and therefore of complying with this part of your request, would exceed the appropriate limit of £600.

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 3 ½ 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 I estimate that it will take more than 3 ½ working days to locate, retrieve and extract this information. In these circumstances we are not obliged under the Act to comply with your request.

It may be the case, however, that the individual councils and TfL - to which diplomatic missions, international organisations and individual diplomats ultimately owe such debts and which have financial authority to waive such fines - hold the information you require, in easily retrievable formats. You may therefore wish to re-direct that element of your request to the creditors concerned, namely:

Barnet Council

Camden Council

Ealing Council

Hammersmith & Fulham Council

Kensington & Chelsea Council

Southwark Council

Wandsworth Council

Westminster Council

Transport for London

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless it is exempt. The information we have supplied to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. You can also find out more about previous FOI replies published on our website at [Publications - Inside Government - GOV.UK](#).

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Yours sincerely,

Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations Unit  
Protocol Directorate



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