



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

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

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

01 June 2015

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0433-15**

Thank you for your email of 30 April 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*Could you please provide me with information that shows the cost per head of hiring each new member of staff in FCO from outside of the Civil Service in the most recent financial year (2014/15)? Could you please also provide me with a breakdown of how these costs are incurred? The breakdown of costs might include - but not be limited to - the following areas:*

- *Cost of advertising and use of external recruitment agencies.*
- *Cost of sifting applicants and carrying out interviews.*
- *Performing pre-employment screening including:*
  - *Basic security check, verification of identity, immigration status and criminal record.*
- *Supplying equipment to new member of staff, including:*
  - *Security pass, IT and mobile phone provision.*

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

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

The Civil Service-wide recruitment freeze introduced in May 2010 limits new appointments to frontline and business-critical jobs only. This has restricted FCO recruitment permitted under the freeze to the Civil Service Fast Stream and short term and permanent specialist roles. However, because of shortages at several grades, in October and November 2014 we were given permission to recruit a number of Apprentices, Administrative Officers and Executive Officers into our Home Civil Service.

For specialist campaigns, the FCO uses recruitment agencies to attract a wide range of applicants to ensure its work force is as diverse and highly skilled as possible. For such campaigns, agencies are better placed to target applicants with the most relevant skills within specific sectors. This has proven to be more cost-effective than in-house recruitment. Agency fees vary according to the type of campaign run and the advertising needed to attract credible candidates.

The initial stages of the 2014 Civil Service Fast Stream Diplomatic Service competition are conducted by the Civil Service Fast Stream Team, for which government departments were charged £4,400 plus VAT per candidate.

The information set out in the attached table details the costs incurred from 1 April 2014 through to end April 2015 for all external vacancies advertised in the UK during financial year 2014/15, regardless of whether the position was filled during this period or whether the contracted agency fees were paid in full. The information excludes our Graduate Interns who are recruited on a fixed term contract lasting up to 8 months. The financial data excludes FCO fixed costs such as Recruitment Team personnel costs, office running costs, etc.

In regard to the cost of pre-employment checks, a basic security check of each successful candidate is carried out by the Hiring Manager. This incurs no cost other than staff time. Once verified, a candidate proceeds on to national security vetting for the level required for the role. The cost per head for national security vetting Security Check is £63 and Developed Vetting is £1,525. The materials cost of issuing a staff security pass is approximately £8.

In regard to the cost of supplying equipment to each new member of staff, standard practice is to recycle office equipment within departments and the wider FCO. Normally a new member of staff will inherit equipment from their predecessor or be issued equipment from existing central inventories. The average cost of supplying and maintaining IT devices for a member of staff is £1,200 per annum. This cost includes equipment, maintenance, system upgrades and IT support. Blackberries are not issued to all new staff. If a role requires a Blackberry it is £450 per device per annum. This includes service support and text messaging but does not include the cost of telephone calls.

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Yours sincerely,

Knowledge Management Officer  
Human Resources Directorate



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