

Government Procurement Cards - 2008-2011

I should point out that the Government Procurement Card is not a credit card. It is a payment charge card that, when used in a well managed way allows public sector workers to pay for low value and other items in a controlled, secure and efficient way typically removing 95 per cent of administrative effort.

The attached spreadsheet details all the Government Procurement Card transactions made by the Department over the last three years. I have set a tab for each year. The data includes, the date of purchase, amount, supplier and merchant category.

Total spending through the Government Procurement Card has halved between 2008-09 and 2010-11. The Department has reduced the amount of cards it holds in the past Financial Year from 69 to 40 and has reduced both transaction and overall credit limits to manage spend more effectively. All spend is subject to approval by line management and monitored centrally to ensure is justified.

You have asked for the names of senior civil servants who have made payments through the Government Procurement Card. However, the Department considers that these names are exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FOI Act which states that information is exempt from disclosure if it is personal data and its disclosure would breach any of the data protection principles in the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998. Under the first data protection principle, personal data can only be disclosed where this would be fair and lawful and in accordance with at least one condition in Schedule 2 of the DPA. The Department takes the view that the individual concerned would have had no reasonable expectation that their personal data in this case would be likely to be made publicly available. Furthermore, the Department takes the view that there is no particular public interest served by the disclosure of this information which would override the individuals' expectations of and right to privacy. We therefore consider that disclosure would be likely to breach one or more of the data protection principles and that the exemption at s.40(2) of the FOI Act therefore applies to this information.