



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

26 June 2013

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0425-13

Thank you for your email of 8 May 2013 asking for information the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) holds on:

“1. Full details of how many departmental staff have been issued with Blackberries or other phones in each of the past three financial years.

2. Full details of how many departmental staff have been issued with Ipads or other tablet-style devices in each of the past three financial years.

3. How many of these Blackberries or other phones have been reported as lost or stolen in each of the past three years.

4. How many of these Ipads or other tablet-style devices have been report as lost or stolen in each of the past three years”.

I can confirm that the FCO does hold some information relevant to your request.

1. Full details of how many departmental staff have been issued with Blackberries or other phones in each of the past three financial years.

From centrally held records, the FCO has approximately 2,600 mobile devices in use. This number includes mobile and smart phones, Blackberry and data devices. The devices are for officers in the UK and the FCO's network of nearly 270 diplomatic overseas posts. These figures, however, do not include any purchases made by our posts overseas using devolved budgets and who may have contracts with local mobile telephone providers. Records of such purchases are 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, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

Information is also not centrally held on mobile devices purchased by FCO posts overseas. Providing this information would, I estimate, exceed 3.5 working days to determine appropriate material within the scope of your request, and locate, retrieve and extract that information. In these circumstances we are not obliged under the Act to comply with your request. You may therefore wish to refine your request to narrow its scope to bring it within

the appropriate limit. You can do this by limiting your request to a specific geographical area or a specific department in London.

2. Full details of how many departmental staff have been issued with Ipads or other tablet-style devices in each of the past three financial years.

We interpret your request to be for the information we hold on iPads and tablet devices purchased through central FCO funds. We have not considered devolved budgets. To search these would exceed the appropriate limit as I've explained above.

According to our records, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has supplied two iPads (not connected to the FCO classified Information and Communications Technology (ICT) system).

3. How many of these Blackberries or other phones have been reported as lost or stolen in each of the past three years.

Further to my letter of 30 May in which I cited section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act – Information intended for future publication, I'm pleased to say that we've recently published the information you requested and section 22 no longer applies. Under section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to you. The information you requested on lost and stolen mobile telephones and laptops is available at http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130603/text/130603w0003.htm#130603w0003.htm_wqn61 (Citation: HC Deb, 3 June 2013, c857W).

4. How many of these Ipads or other tablet-style devices have been report as lost or stolen in each of the past three years.”

Please see question two above. There has been no reported loss of iPads or tablet devices purchased through central FCO funds.