



Department  
of Energy &  
Climate Change

**Department of Energy & Climate  
Change**

3 Whitehall Place,  
London SW1A 2AW  
E: [finance.foipq@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:finance.foipq@decc.gsi.gov.uk)  
**[www.decc.gov.uk](http://www.decc.gov.uk)**

Your ref:  
Our ref: 13/0745

July 2013

**RE: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

Thank you for your email of 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013 requesting further information on Departmental use of procurement cards.

With reference to your earlier request (ref 13/0250), our records show that we wrote to you on the 13<sup>th</sup> March and subsequently responded on the 8<sup>th</sup> April to your follow-up enquiry of the 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

You have further refined your enquiry and now specifically ask:-

- how many procurement cards are issued in the Department;
- whether an internal audit of procurement card spending in the last three years has been undertaken and if report(s) are available;
- if any procurement card holder has been reprimanded for its usage or had a transaction been queried for validity and;
- the name of the bank(s) who issue the Department's procurement cards.

In response

- as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, 313 procurement cards have been issued to DECC staff – ministers themselves are not issued with government procurement cards. You may however, wish to refer to the National Audit's report on use of government card across government for further information [NAO Central Government's use of the Government Procurement Card \(GPC\)](#)
- an internal audit review of DECC's use of procurement cards has not been undertaken
- Your question on card misuse was previously answered (letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> March - in reply to your earlier request FOI 13/0250)

- The name of the issuing bank of the Department's procurement cards is "Barclays"

Additionally, you have asked that the spend details for the last 3 fiscal years (2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13) in our response be provided in CSV format with the header to be the first row with no rows following details of the last transaction. Layout in the column order –

- department name
- posted date and occurred date if available
- billing amount (please let us know how you express returns e.g. as a negative number, as a number in brackets or other variations)
- merchant name (as expressed in the bank statements if available)
- Category of spending type if available (plus details of the classification system and the banking classification system if also available e.g Merchant Category Code)
- Justification (if given)

As explained in our reply to your earlier FOI request (13/0250), in accordance with the government's Transparency Agenda requirements, details of the Department's GPC expenditure transactions over £500 for the period May 2012 to March 2013 are published on the government website <http://www.gov.uk/decc>.

Earlier information on procurement card expenditure for transactions over £500 for April 2011 to October 2011 and for January to March 2012 is published on the Data.gov website at: <http://data.gov.uk/dataset/decc-gpc-spend>

As this information is already accessible to you it is exempt under section 21 of the FOI Act (information available by other means).

We estimate that providing all of the details you have requested would exceed the cost limit of £600 provided under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act. This represents the estimated cost of spending 3.5 working days: (i) determining whether the Department holds the information, and (ii) locating, retrieving and extracting the information. The Act provides that we are not obliged to comply with requests where the estimated cost of complying would exceed this limit.

In order to provide you with the information on the scale that you have requested would require searching, locating and extracting every government

procurement card transaction (electronic and paper records) since the start of the 2010-11 financial year. Given the volume of data that would fall under the scope of this identifying and gathering the information would likely involve a significant cost and a significant diversion of resources from a number of teams. This exercise is estimated to take longer than the 3.5 working day limit.

It requires a considerable amount of effort to ensure that the financial information which is published does not contain information of a personal nature (so that it complies with the Data Protection Act) and is presented in a way which is understandable and transparent to the public. As you know, under the Cabinet Office transparency agenda this work is undertaken on all transactions over £500 on Government Procurement Cards since April 2010.

In cases where we apply section 12 of the FOIA, we usually suggest to requesters ways in which they can narrow down the requests so that they fall within the cost limit. In this case however, other than referring you to the published information mentioned previously and again above, I am afraid I am not able to do so.

## **Appeal Procedure**

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be sent to: Information Rights Unit ([foi@decc.gov.uk](mailto:foi@decc.gov.uk)) or by post to Security & Information Rights Unit (DECC Shared Services), Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, Victoria 3, 5th Floor, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.