



Vehicle & Operator Services Agency

From: **Information Access**
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BY E-MAIL

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Our Ref: **F0003315**

Date: 14th June 2011

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

I refer to your e-mail of 3rd May 2011 requesting information, which we have dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I informed you in my letter dated 16th May 2011 that the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) was considering the use of the exemption given at Section 40 (Personal Information) of the Act. This consideration has concluded that this exemption is not engaged in this case for any of the information being supplied by the Agency.

As explained in my initial letter, VOSA can only answer certain points raised in your letter, and our response is below. The remaining points will be answered under separate cover on behalf of the Traffic Commissioners.

Q1) Please supply details of each occasion each named Traffic Commissioner has claimed more than the VOSA or Department for Transport limit set for expenditure on night subsistence and day subsistence and each occasion a named Traffic Commissioner has claimed for first class rail travel between the start of April 2009 and the end of March 2011.

A1) VOSA does not record the information in a manner which would allow this information to be extracted within the costs limit set under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as a manual search would need to be done of all claims submitted. The cost limit is currently £600 based on a charge of £25 per hour.

Q2) Please supply information on each occasion a named Traffic Commissioner has claimed for travel outside of their own traffic area on duties not associated with the holding of a public inquiry, the cost of that claim and the reason for the travel.

A2) Please see A1) above.

Q3) Please supply details of all entries on the hospitality register for each Traffic Commissioner between April 2009 and the end of March 2011.

A3) This question is being dealt with by the Traffic Commissioners Freedom of Information team.

Q4) Please can you say what the salary of a Traffic Commissioner was in 2000 and what is the current salary.

A4) As at 1st January 2000 Traffic Commissioners salary was £56,406. Their current salary is £92,629.

Q5) Please can you say what is the running cost of the office of the TC for the NW.

A5) The total annual accommodation costs currently are approximately £65,800. This includes rent, rates, insurance, telephony charges (mobile and landline) and service charges which includes gas, electricity water etc.

Q6) Please can you say what relocation costs were paid to Beverley Bell and Philip Brown to allow them to relocate to Bristol and Lancaster following their appointments as Traffic Commissioners and if they are still in receipt of any element of those relocation costs.

A6) Relocation costs were paid to both Traffic Commissioners named above. Mrs Bell has confirmed that she made a claim to the Department in October 2004 for £5000, which was the upper limit set by the Department for such claims at the time.

Philip Brown also received a payment for his relocation which also had an upper limit of £5000. As you may be aware (and as mentioned in a Press Notice issued by the Department for Transport on 27th May 2011 announcing the temporary appointment of Beverley Bell as Senior Traffic Commissioner) Philip Brown is on special leave for health reasons. I have not therefore been able to confirm with him the exact amount paid.

Q7) Please can you say if Philip Brown had to apply through open competition for the post of TC for SEMTA and, if not, how was his appointment made.

A7) Philip Brown was transferred from the Western Traffic Area to the South East and Metropolitan Traffic Area. There was therefore no open competition for this post, but did result in an open competition to "back fill" the vacancy left in the Western Traffic Area.

Q8) Please can you say if Philip Brown was granted any relocation costs on his move as TC for WTA to TC for SEMTA.

A8) Files held by the central Department for Transport do not show any payment being made to Mr Brown in respect of this move.

Q9) Please can you say what open competition did Chris Heaps apply for to secure his appointments as DTC after his retirement as TC and if there was not an open competition, how was he appointed to those posts.

A9) The Department appointed Chris Heaps on a temporary basis for a seven month period from 14th April to 14th November 2007 to ensure the Traffic Commissioner workload could be managed given the absence of an Eastern Traffic Commissioner during that period, and a shortage of Deputy Traffic Commissioners. The Department moved as quickly as it could to recruit, through open competition, a replacement Eastern Traffic Commissioner and six more Deputy Traffic Commissioners.

Q10) Please can you say what was the cost of producing the 2009/10 TCs annual reports in terms of staff time and was proportion of that was TC effort.

A10) Details of time spent on producing the Annual Report either by administrative staff or Traffic Commissioners is not currently recorded, and therefore is not available.

Q11) Please can you say how many times the 2009/10 TCs annual reports have been accessed on the VOSA/Dept for Transport's web site.

A11) From 1st December 2010 to 19th April 2011 the following page <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/tpm/trafficcommissioners/annualreports/trafficcommissioners/> has received 715 page views, of which 578 were unique page views.

Q12) Please can you say how many public inquiries have been held by each TC in the years 2009/10 and 2010/11 (Apr to March) and how many have been held by their DTCs.

A12) 2009/10 details are given in The Traffic Commissioners Annual Report (<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/tpm/trafficcommissioners/annualreports/trafficcommissioners/>) and can be found in Table 20 which can be found on page 72. Figures for 2010/11 will be published in due course in the Annual Report for 2010/11. As this information is due to be published in the future this information is being withheld in line with the absolute exemption given in Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This states:

(1) Information is exempt information if –

(a) the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person. At some future date (whether determined or not),

(b) the information was already held with a view to such publication at the time when the request for information was made, and

(c) it is reasonable in all circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the date referred to in paragraph (a).

Q13) Please can you say how many disciplinary PIs have been held in each TA in the years 2009/10 and 2010/11 (Apr to March) and how many of these resulted in no action or just the issue of a warning.

A13) 2009/10 details are given in The Traffic Commissioners Annual Report (<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/tpm/trafficcommissioners/annualreports/trafficcommissioners/>) and can be found in Table 7 which can be found on page 59 (HGV's) and Table 18 on page 70 (PSV's). Figures for 2010/11 will be published in due course in the Annual Report for 2010/11. As this information is due to be published in the future this information is being withheld in line with the absolute exemption given in Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, details as above.

Q14) Please can you say what is the average cost of each disciplinary PI.

A14) This information is not currently recorded and is therefore not available.

Q15) Please can you say what the recidivism rate is following disciplinary PIs held in each Traffic Area for PIs held in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

A15) Please see A14) above.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us, quoting reference **F0003315**.

If you are unhappy with the response provided, you may ask for an internal review. To request an internal review, please write to:

VOSA Corporate Office,
Berkeley House,
Croydon Street,
Bristol,
BS5 0DA

or email vosa.corporateoffice@vosa.gsi.gov.uk

giving the reasons for your dissatisfaction. It will help us if you quote the reference number for your case.

If you do not agree with the outcome of the internal review, you may lodge an appeal with the Information Commissioner (www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk). The Information Commissioner is an independent official appointed by the Crown to oversee the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

The Information Commissioner can consider complaints about any aspect of the way in which requests for information have been handled. Please note: the Information Commissioner would be unlikely to consider your complaint if you have not first requested an internal review.

You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

VOSA Information Access