



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Human Resource Directorate
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www.gov.uk/fco

13 January 2014

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 (FOIA) - REQUEST REF: 0748-13

Thank you for your request dated 14 August 2013 under the Freedom of Information Act asking for the following information to cover the 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 financial years and be broken down by financial year in each instance.

- 1.) **The amount of money (in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries) given to staff to pay, in full or in part, for their children's education.**
- 2.) **The number of staff given money (in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries) to pay, in full or in part, for their children's education.**
- 3.) **A breakdown of the amount of money by individual staff member and how it is paid to them, i.e. in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries.**
- 4.) **The names, position and grade of staff given money (in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries) to pay, in full or in part, for their children's education.**
- 5.) **The salary of individual staff members given money (in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries) to pay, in full or part, for their children's education.**
- 6.) **The names and locations of educational institutions receiving money given to staff (in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries) to pay, in full or in part, for their children's education.**
- 7.) **The number of children each staff member is given money (in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries) for.**

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

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

Members of the diplomatic service must be prepared to serve anywhere in the world at any time during their career, sometimes at very short notice. Those who are parents are legally obliged to ensure that their children receive a full-time education. Most parents

prefer to take their children with them abroad, but in some countries we do not permit staff to take their children either for health or security reasons. Where staff cannot or choose not to take their children overseas, we contribute towards the costs of boarding school education in the UK for children up to the age of 18, provided that officers meet specific eligibility criteria. This enables the children to have stability and continuity of education. We provide financial support to all diplomatic staff, who serve overseas, to help enable them to meet this requirement.

We expect children who accompany their parents on postings overseas to use free state schooling if it is available locally and suitable. If suitable English-language schooling is not available free of charge locally, but is available at fee-charging schools, we pay fees to enable children to receive the education they would be entitled to in the UK.

Financial support is only provided to UK-based FCO staff. The majority of our staff globally are employed locally and receive no financial support for schooling.

1.) The amount of money (in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries) given to staff to pay, in full or in part, for their children’s education.

The costs to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) of Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) for children of FCO staff attending school in the UK, and for schooling overseas for children at posts with their parents, were as follows:

Financial Year	Total spend in £ Sterling			
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
CEA (cost of children educated in UK schools)	13,329,851	13,067,398	15,448,371	14,926,061
Costs of children educated at posts overseas	11,535,667	11,520,900	11,761,394	12,339,254

The FCO’s financial support towards the cost of schooling in the UK for children of eligible staff is limited to term fees up to a ceiling. The ceiling for a senior boarding child is determined by an independent survey conducted annually by ECA International, which is used by public and private sector employers whose staff work across the world. The ceiling is reviewed each summer based on the results of the survey.

Staff whose children attend more expensive schools must always pay the difference in cost of fees themselves.

The CEA figures from 2011-12 onwards are not directly comparable with earlier years. Costs vary year on year according to the numbers and ages of children at school, and the location of staff claimants. Additionally the FCO has changed the way it records its management information so that other partners in Government are now included in the overall figures.

2.) The number of staff given money (in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries) to pay, in full or in part, for their children's education.

The number of staff in receipt of Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA), for children at school in the UK, was as follows:

Financial Year	Number of Staff claimants
2009-10	339
2010-11	340
2011-12	456
2012-13	442

The figures from 2011-12 onwards are not directly comparable with earlier years, as the FCO has changed the way it records its management information so that other partners in Government are now included in the overall figures.

Payment for schooling of children living at Posts overseas with their parents is made direct to the schools used by the Posts concerned. As this information is not held centrally we have calculated that, along with certain other parts of your request, to comply with it would exceed the £600 cost limit provided for in section 12 FOIA.

3.) A breakdown of the amount of money by individual staff member and how it is paid to them, i.e. in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries.

This information is not available in the format required for the each of the years, and to provide it in that form would entail checking individual files and that would exceed the cost limit. I should add that even if it were, I would not be able to disclose it as the information is the personal data of the individuals concerned. In such circumstances, section 40 (2) and (3)(a) of the FOIA applies. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the First Data Protection Principle. This states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this principle which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, section 40(2) and (3)(a) confers an absolute exemption on disclosure.

However, in an effort to be as transparent as possible, I can tell you that CEA is paid three times per year with salary into the staff member's bank account. Staff are required to complete and submit a claim form along with the school invoice before the payment is made.

4.) The names, position and grade of staff given money (in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries) to pay, in full or in part, for their children's education.

We are unable to provide the requested information on names and positions of staff as we judge that the disclosure of such information, which constitutes personal data, would contravene one of the data protection principles, and as such the exemption under section 40(2) and (3)(a) apply. Section 40(2) and (3)(a) confers an absolute exemption on disclosure.

Staff in all grades who meet the eligibility criteria may claim Continuity of Education Allowance. The information requested is not available in the format required for the each of the years, and to provide it in that form would exceed the cost limit. In the two most recent financial years, staff claimants were as follows:

Grade	Number of Staff	
	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13
Clerical Support (A2)	24	24
Third Secretary (B3)	58	56
Second Secretary (C4)	115	109
First Secretary (D6/7)	133	137
Senior Management Structure (SMS)	126	116
Totals	456	442

5.) The salary of individual staff members given money (in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries) to pay, in full or part, for their children's education.

This information is not available in the format required for the each of the years, and to provide it in that form would exceed the cost limit. As with my reply to question 3, even if it were available, I would be unable to release it as it would be the personal data of the individuals concerned, and releasing it would breach the First Data Protection Principle, so the exemption under section 40(2) and(3)(a) applies.

There are currently claimants from each of the pay grades, with salaries within the following ranges:

Band A2	£19,437 – £21,912
Band B3	£21,646 – £27,658
Band C4	£23,363 – £32,834
Band C5	£33,075 – £40,905
Band D6	£43,514 – £56,339
Band D7	£54,883 – £68,539
SMS	£60,000 - £149,999

6.) The names and locations of educational institutions receiving money given to staff (in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries) to pay, in full or in part, for their children's education.

I enclose a list of schools attended by the children of staff in receipt of Continuity of Education Allowance in each of the financial years.

7.) The number of children each staff member is given money (in allowances or expenses or specifically allocated in salaries) for.

The information is not available for the full period, and to locate and compile it would exceed the appropriate cost limit. Information is available for the last 2 financial years, as follows:

Number of children in family in CEA	Number of staff claimants	
	FY 2011-12	FY 2012-13
1	248	240
2	161	157
3 or more	47	45

Please be aware that the figures and totals given in reply to the various parts of the question include eligible staff from other Government departments serving overseas on the FCO platform e.g. staff from UKBA and UKTI. To separate out just FCO employees would exceed the appropriate cost limit.

You can also find out more about previous FOI replies published on our website at [Publications - Inside Government - GOV.UK](#)

Yours sincerely,

Human Resource Directorate



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.