



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Human Resources Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
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11 November 2014

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: FOI 0935-14

Thank you for your email of 3 October asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

Please could you send me a list of UK Heads of Mission. Please also include the following:

i) the state or states to which they are currently accredited and the date on which they were accredited, whether or not this is their current posting

iii) their socio-economic background

iv) whether they attended a fee-paying school

v) whether they were the first in their family to attend University

v) whether they attended Oxford or Cambridge University

vi) their gender.

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

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

Please find attached a table of the information that we have and can release to you. It lists all current UK Heads of Mission, the month and year in which they took up their appointment, and their gender. You will see that in Costa Rica the Head of Mission role is currently filled by a husband and wife job share. This arrangement, which has now been

operated in a number of posts, enables the FCO to make maximum use of the talents of our staff and promotes diversity.

Please note that, where a Head of Mission post is listed as vacant, the Head of Mission duties are performed by a Charge d'Affaires pending the arrival of the new Head of Mission.

You asked for information on the socio-economic backgrounds of our Heads of Mission. Since 2011, the Civil Service has systematically collated data on the socio-economic background of Fast Stream recruits. However, this data is not available for the cohort represented by our current Heads of Mission. Although we hold information about the educational qualifications of our staff, we do not hold consistent information on the types of schools they attended, nor on where they attended university if they did and whether or not they were the first members of their families to do so. To search for the information that we do hold would exceed the appropriate cost limit set by the Freedom of Information Act for dealing with requests.

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. The limit has been specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. For central government the appropriate limit is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one or more persons spending 3 ½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it. Your request as presently formulated is widely-framed and I estimate that it will take more than 3 ½ working days to locate, retrieve and extract this information. In these circumstances we are not obliged under the Act to comply with your request. Normally under section 16 of the Act we would be obliged to advise you to refine your request to narrow its scope to bring it within the appropriate limit. However, in this case we cannot advise you how to narrow your request.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless it is exempt. The information we have supplied to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

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Yours sincerely,

Human Resources Directorate



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