



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Human Resources Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

12 February 2014

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 1049-13

Thank you for your email of 10 November asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

Please can you let me know what percentage of the current British Ambassadors and High Commissioners were born in each part of the UK:

1. *England*
2. *Scotland*
3. *Wales; and*
4. *Northern Ireland*

Can you let me know since 1997 what percentage of British Ambassadors and High Commissioners were born in each part of the UK:

1. *England*
2. *Scotland*
3. *Wales; and*
4. *Northern Ireland*

Does the FCO hold any policy documents, memos or guides on ensuring that all parts of the UK are represented in our foreign embassies?

Can you provide me with copies of any emails which discusses the split in English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish representation at Ambassadorial/High Commissioner level, or at any level in Foreign Embassies?

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.

The key principle of all FCO appointments is selection by merit through fair and open competition. We therefore do not hold any information or any e-mails which discuss the split in English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish representation at any level in foreign embassies.

We are unable to provide the exact answer to your first two questions as this information is not held centrally but on each individual's personal file and to provide it would entail checking each and every personnel file. This would exceed the appropriate cost limit.

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.

Please note that, we may be unable to provide this information even if you were to refine your request to narrow its scope to bring it within the appropriate limit as the requested information is personal data.

Section 2(a) of the Data Protection Act defines the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject to be 'sensitive personal data' and Schedule 3(1) of the Data Protection Act states that we are unable to process 'sensitive personal data' unless the data subject has given his explicit consent to the processing of the personal data. This means that we would be obliged to ask the individuals for consent to release the information and, if that consent was not forthcoming, withhold the information under section 40(2) and (3) of the FOIA.

However, I can inform you that staff in all grades are able to make a voluntary declaration of national identity (please note that this is **not** their nationality or place of birth). Of those that have declared a national identity, 79% have stated that they are British or Mixed-British, 14% English, 2% Scottish, 1% Welsh and the remaining 4% have either stated that they do not wish to declare a national identity or have declared another national identity where the percentage is less than 1%.

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.

I hope you are satisfied with this reply.

Yours sincerely,

Knowledge Management Officer
Human Resources 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.