



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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04 January 2016

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: FOI Ref 1128-15

Thank you for your email of 25 November asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

- 1) The amount of money paid to FCO workers in Continuity of Education Allowance in 2013-2014 (using the same time period constraints used in similar FOI publications).*
- 2) The grade of staff who received the CEA payments in 2013-2014.*
- 3) A list of schools attended by the children of staff in receipt of Continuity of Education Allowance in 2013-2014.*

Previous FOI publication providing the same details for the year 2012-2013.

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 see below the information the FCO can release to you.

It is a condition of their employment that 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 with children have a legal obligation as parents to ensure that their children receive a full-time education from the age of five years. Most parents prefer to take their children with them abroad, but in some of the 168 countries and territories where the FCO has UK based staff, we do not permit staff to take their children either for health or security reasons. In others, local schools of an acceptable standard are not available. It is longstanding practice that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) helps staff meet their potentially conflicting obligations by providing financial support for their children's education in the UK where staff choose this, or are obliged to do so given local conditions in the country to which they are posted, particularly at secondary level.

The FCO refunds standard term fees up to a ceiling which is reviewed annually. Where staff opt to send their children to more expensive schools, staff meet the difference in cost. The maximum amount the FCO will pay is determined by an independent survey conducted by

ECA International, which is used by public and private sector employers whose staff work across the world. Various factors, including availability of places (sometimes at short notice) and proximity of other family members, influence which schools staff choose for their children.

In 2013/14 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) paid £13,162,823 Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) for children attending school in the UK. The number of staff claiming CEA in 2013/14 was 378 for 604 children. There is a slightly higher figure published previously because that includes fees paid by the FCO for staff from other departments deployed overseas which we reclaim from those departments. I attach a list of the schools attended, broken down by schools (1) where parents make a contribution to the fees (2) those where some parents make a contribution, and (3) those schools which fell within the FCO ceiling, in 2013/14. In all three categories some schools offer reductions which reduce the published fees (in some cases this brings them within the ceiling).

In 2012/13 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) paid £14,926,061 Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) for children attending school in the UK. The number of staff claiming CEA in 2012/13 was 442 for 700 children. The list of schools was published in a previous FOI request 1170/13 (copy attached).

There were claimants in all FCO grades, Bands A2, B3, C4, C5, D6, D7 and SMS in both 2012/13 and 2013/14.

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Yours sincerely,

International HR



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