



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

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16 February 2015

Dear,

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: FOI 0115-15**

Thank you for your letter received 26 January 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*"I am requesting the following information:*

- 1) *What are the latest figures for international child abduction. How many children have been abducted from the UK in the last three years?*
- 2) *For the latest available figures, how many of these children have been abducted via the airport as opposed to the sea ports, Eurostar and Northern Ireland border.*
- 3) *For the latest figures, how many children who have been abducted, have been repatriated? Of those repatriated, how many were from Hague and Non Hague countries?"*

We have now completed our search and consultation process and I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold some information relevant to your request.

For question 1), the FCO only have figures for the number of Child Abduction cases reported to our Posts overseas.

The table below shows the total number of child abductions and custody cases reported to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Child Abduction and Custody	All Posts
2012	609
2013	610
2014	477



This data has been taken from the FCO's global consular assistance database, and includes cases that were recorded by consular officers where the main or secondary reason that consular assistance was provided was in connection with child abduction or child custody.

It is also possible to obtain our statistics on the GOV.UK website – the link for this is as follows: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/consular-data>. The information is available by month, for each of our diplomatic missions overseas.

For question 2), we do not have statistics for methods of abduction. We also do not have this information recorded in all cases of Child Abduction.

The only way to get an indication in those cases where it is recorded would be to go through the case notes on the database of every Child Abduction case in the last three years, which would exceed the appropriate cost limit. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 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 3.5 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 it will take more than 3.5 working days to locate, retrieve and extract this information. In these circumstances we are not obliged under FOIA to comply with your request.

For question 3), we do not have statistics for the numbers of children repatriated. We would only be able to search for the number of these cases that were closed then check the reason for closure. Again, examination of the case notes would be necessary and again this would, as above, exceed the cost limit.

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Yours sincerely,

Consular FOI/DPA team  
Consular Directorate



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