

We were asked:

1. How many staff are currently authorised to use purchase cards or similar?
2. The total amount spent by the government minister, junior minister, their aides, special advisers, assistants, or staff in their office using purchase cards or similar in:
a) 2014 b) 2013 c) 2012

This relates to separate spending in their government role rather than MP's expenses which I am aware can be obtained from IPSA. If you cannot provide the data for those time periods could you do so in the following way:

- a) 2013/14 b) 2012/13 c) 2011/12

3. Please also provide a copy of the card statements, 'management information' or line-by-line data for each card (in a xls or csv format) giving a breakdown of the spending, including the name of the authorised card user(s), the date of each transaction, the merchant paid, the transaction amount, the transaction description and any other description held on record to explain each transaction.
4. The total amount spent by senior staff (Senior management level or higher, not including those covered by Q1) using purchase cards or similar in:
a) 2014 b) 2013 c) 2012

If you cannot provide the data for those time periods could you do so in the following way:

- a) 2013/14 b) 2012/13 c) 2011/12

6. Please also provide a copy of the card statements, or line-by-line data for each card (in a xls or csv format) giving a breakdown of the spending, including the name of the senior staff/officer/authorised card user(s), the date of each transaction, the merchant paid, the transaction amount, the transaction description and any other description held on record to explain each transaction.

7. The total amount spent by other staff using purchase cards or similar in:
a) 2014 b) 2012 c) 2011

If you cannot provide the data for those time periods could you do so in the following way:

- a) 2013/14 (so far) b) 2012/13 c) 2011/12

8. Please also provide a copy of the card statements, 'management information' or line-by-line data for each card (in a xls or csv format) giving a breakdown of the spending, including the name of the worker/authorised card user(s), the date of each transaction, the merchant paid, the transaction amount, the transaction description and any other description held on record to explain each transaction.

We replied:

- A1. As at 30 September 2014, seven members staff were authorised to use purchase cards or similar.

A2. Government Minister's or Special Advisors are not issued with purchase cards. The total amount spent by staff in their offices from financial years 2011/12 to 2013/14 are set out in the table below:

Financial Year	Amount (£)
2011/12	4,346
2012/13	10,976
2013/14	13,681

A3. I am unable to comply with your request under Section 12(1) of the FOIA. The Department has estimated that to locate, retrieve and extract information relevant to this request would exceed the appropriate cost limit.

In order to retrieve and extract the statements relating to my answer to question 2 above, I would be required to locate, retrieve and extract a large portion to information in order to provide the detail you require. In addition to the time already taken to answer questions 1 and 2 above, this task would exceed the appropriate cost limit outlined within section 12(1) of the FOIA.

The law allows us to decline to answer requests under FOIA when we estimate that it would cost us more than £600 to identify, locate, and extract the information that has been asked for. The appropriate cost limit is equivalent to 3½ working days' worth of work, calculated at £25 per hour.

You may wish to refine your request to bring it within the cost limit by narrowing the timeframe. Please note that any refined request may still exceed the cost limit.

A4. Please refer to my answer to question 3.

A5. Please refer to my answer to question 3.

A6. Please refer to my answer to question 3.

A7. Please refer to my answer to question 3.