



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

16 July 2015

Human Resources Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

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

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0586-15

Thank you for your email of 18th June 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

- 1) For each consecutive year through 2000 - 2014, the amount of hires - and their respective ethnicities - made by the FCO via the Civil Service fast stream.
- 2) The amount of BME (black and ethnic minorities) - and their respective sexes - working at the FCO (Britain only) in a capacity at or above that of the EO (executive officer) grade.

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

1) Information on the number of Fast Stream hires by the FCO and their respective ethnicities for each year between 2000 and 2010 is not held centrally and that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act. 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.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office does hold information relevant to your request from 2011/12 financial year. Under section 21 of the Act, we are not required to

provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to you. Some of the information relevant to your request can be found in the FCO Diversity and Equality Reports 2012, 2013 and 2014 in the GOV.UK website via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk> . The FCO Diversity and Equality Report for 2015 will be published in due course. Therefore, this information is exempt under section 22 of the FOIA – Information intended for future publication. Section 22 provides that:

1. Information is exempt information if -
 - (a) the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not),
 - (b) it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the date referred to in paragraph (a).

The exemption under Sections 22 of the Freedom of Information Act recognises that it must be reasonable in all the circumstances to withhold the information until the date of publication. Given the necessary preparation and administration involved in publishing the information, we consider that our publication timetable is reasonable.

2) We encourage all our staff to declare their ethnicity through voluntary declarations on diversity. 75.6% of staff have given voluntary declarations. As of 31 March 2015 there are 186 FCO employees at grade EO and above working in the UK, who have declared themselves BME. Of these, 114 are female and 72 are male. We also have 77 officers working in our missions overseas of EO grade and above who have declared themselves BME. Of these, 35 are female and 42 are male.

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on gov.uk in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours sincerely,

Analyst
Human Resources Directorate



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