



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Consular Directorate
WH4.3

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

www.gov.uk/government/organisations

02 March 2015

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 0108-15

Thank you for your email of 2 February 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You noted:

The FCO dealt with 553 international parental abduction and child custody cases in 2013/2014.

And asked:

- 1. We are interested to know if these figures record children being abducted in to the UK, from the UK, or both?*
- 2. With regards to abductions going in to the UK: how many are British children, born to British parents, with one of the parents bringing the children home after a failed migration?*
- 3. What are the statistics of British children born to British parents being ordered back (under the Hague Convention of International Parental Child Abduction 1980) to a foreign country after a failed migration by the Royal Courts of Justice under Return Orders?*
- 4. What percentage of abductors are primary carers of the children?*
- 5. What percentage of the abductors are mothers compared to fathers?*
- 6. What percentage of domestic abuse/domestic violence is given for the reason of the abduction?*

The statistics quoted above are the total figures from our database which have the attribute of either 'abduction' or 'child custody', we do not split these attributes into separate numbers for either case. There may be a situation where a child custody case also has some aspects of an abduction case, likewise a case that has originally been given the attribute of abduction, may develop into a case that could be given the attribute of 'child custody'. Our priority is to deal with cases by providing the best consular assistance we are able.

In response to the questions noted above;

1 We do not record figures for whether children have been abducted in to the UK or from the UK or both. We do not record our statistics in a way that it would be possible to retrieve

accurate figures to answer this question. Section 12 of the 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 ½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it. We estimate that the time needed to answer this question would breach Section 12 of the FOIA. We do not record this as an attribute in our central statistical data base and we would have to manually search through all our case files. In these circumstances, we are not obliged under the Act to comply with this question.

2 Same response as for question one, we do not record figures in a way that we could search our database using this criteria. As above, Section 12 would apply.

3 We understand that The International Child Abduction and Contact Unit, (ICACU) hold statistics for British children born to British parents being ordered back to England and Wales. We would only record families who have contacted us for consular assistance. ICACU's contact details are available at the website <https://www.gov.uk/return-or-contact-abducted-child>

4 Same response as for question one, we do not record figures in a way that we could search our database using this criteria. As above, Section 12 would apply.

5 We would not be able to find statistics for this question, some of the cases may be about the same child and we do not record individuals as abductor / left behind parent. These are both parties in a child abduction case and our role is not to apportion blame. As for question one, Section 12 would apply, as above.

6 Same response as for question one, we do not record figures in a way that we could search our database using this criteria. As above, Section 12 would apply.

We are very interested in your work and would welcome an opportunity to discuss it with you

You can also find out more about previous FOI replies published on our website at [Publications - Inside Government - GOV.UK](#).

Yours sincerely,

Desk officer

FOI / DPA team, Consular Directorate

