



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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

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

17 January 2014

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 1170-13

Thank you for your email of 12 December asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

1. Could you please give me a full list of all your employees who claim the Continuity of Education Allowance. Can I also have:

- * their job title;*
- * where they are based;*
- * which school their child goes to;*
- * and the total amount paid in each of the past three years.*

If you cannot provide the names could I have the anonymised details?

2. Could I have a list of all staff in receipt of the Cost of Living Allowance for those living abroad? Can I also have:

- * their job title;*
- * where they are based;*
- * the total amount paid in each of the past three years.*

Again, if you cannot provide the names could I have the anonymised details?

3. Could I have a list of all ambassadors and the amount they receive for official entertainment needs? Can I have:

- * their name and the country they work in;*
- * how much they have received in each of the past three years.*

Are there any other staff who receive an entertainment allowance? If so, can I have details of these?

You further clarified on 16 December that the third question about entertainment allowances referred to 'frais'.

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.

We are unable to provide you with lists of staff, their job titles or where they are based. Release of the information in these circumstances could lead to the individuals being identified. We therefore judge that the disclosure of such information, which constitutes personal data, would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances, Section 40 (2) and (3) of the FOIA applies. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This states that personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this principle which, in our view, would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure.

Information on payment of Continuity of Education Allowance, Cost of Living Addition and Entertainment has already been provided to you by our Newsdesk. Under Section 21 (Information Accessible by Other Means) of the FOI Act, we are not required to provide information in response to a request if it is already reasonably accessible to the applicant.

We have already provided you with total expenditure on Business Hospitality and Official Representation. Entertainment budgets are devolved annually to our Posts overseas. I am unable to provide you with the breakdown for how much the Ambassador or High Commissioner at each Post spent on entertainment as this information is not held centrally and would involve contacting each post for the information. This would exceed the appropriate cost limit.

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. You may wish to refine your request to particular posts.

However, I am pleased to enclose a copy of the schools attended by children of staff who received Continuity of Education Allowance (in response to your first question) and a list of Ambassadors and High Commissioners (in response to your third question).

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless it is exempt. The information we have supplied to you may now be

published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research you are doing and for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder. Most documents supplied by the FCO will have been produced by government officials and will be protected by Crown Copyright. You can find details on the arrangements for re-using Crown Copyright on the Office of Public Sector Information website.

Information you receive which is not subject to Crown Copyright continues to be protected by the copyright of the person, or organisation, from which the information originated. You must ensure that you gain their permission before reproducing any third party (non-Crown Copyright) information.

Yours sincerely,

Human Resources Directorate



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.