

Our ref: CRS 723,131
Your ref:

via email

██████████
Charging and Policy Team Leader
WMRCC Quinton
1 Ridgeway, Quinton
Birmingham B32 1AF

13 July 2015

Dear ██████████

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST - DART CHARGE

Thank you for your emails dated 15 June and 7 July 2015 under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requesting further information about Dart Charge. The specific details of your request have been extracted from your email and are highlighted in bold below and answered within the body of this letter.

1. How many foreign registered cars have passed though the crossing?

We can confirm that 1,417,911 crossings were recorded by owners of non-UK registered vehicles during the charging hours (6am – 10pm) for the period covering 30 November 2014 to 14 June 2015.

We do not monitor the category or classification of vehicles for crossings made outside chargeable hours. To do so would breach data protection guidance.

2. How many failed to pay

We continue to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) for the period covering this request. To help drivers adjust to the new system we delayed issuing the first PCNs to give people more time to pay the charge. We are also issuing warning letters with the PCN in the first instance of non-payment of a vehicle giving the registered owner 14 days to pay the charge, and any subsequent charges due during that period, and have the PCN cancelled. We are actively monitoring all aspects of PCN compliance and will publish data in due course in compliance with section 22(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

3. How many requests you have made to foreign agencies to trace the driver

We can confirm that up to 7 July, 192,293 PCNs have been passed to the European Debt Recovery Agency.

4. How many have subsequently paid

We are actively monitoring all aspects of PCN compliance and will publish data in due course in compliance with section 22(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The enforcement process can take longer for non-UK drivers from some countries because we are required to request registered keeper details by post and, in some cases, it can take up to 2 months to obtain this information.

In your subsequent email on 7 July 2015, you asked what we are doing to help ensure that foreign drivers pay their Dart Charge, and how any shortfall in revenue from non-payment of Dart Charge was made up.

Information on how to pay Dart Charge and the road layout changes at the Crossing are available in 10 languages in the form of our multilingual booklet. These booklets and additional updates in the form of newsletters have been and continue to be distributed across Europe in digital and hardcopy formats via our stakeholders.

Printed copies of this information have been supplied to the Port of Dover, Calais and in the Eurotunnel freight and passenger terminals, both in the UK and in France. Cross Channel ferry Company, myferrylink receive regular updates and have been provided with the same hardcopy information for their customers. The ferry company itself decides where on board they make the material available. Information banners and posters have also been provided to the ports.

European freight organisations Motis and Multi Service Europe regularly send out updated Dart Charge information via their customer databases. This comprises in excess of 85,000 contacts across 24 countries.

We are not complacent in our approach to promoting and publicising Dart Charge. We have continued to work with a range of partners to communicate information to drivers crossing the channel. For example, Newhaven Port have recently agreed to support our ongoing campaign by making leaflets available on all ferries between Newhaven and Dieppe. We also now have the support of DFDS Seaways who have kindly agreed to have our marketing materials on five of their ships throughout the summer getaway period. We are continuing to work to actively encourage new partners to support the Dart Charge public information campaign and distribute material on our behalf.

The road signs you mention are designed to make it clear to all motorists, irrespective of their country of origin that they are entering a road charging zone and information on how to pay. We have chosen messages that are easy to understand but without distracting drivers.

We are serious about pursuing non-payment of the charge regardless of the vehicle's country of origin. All revenues from Dart Charge are passed to HM Treasury, and by law they have to be spent on transport improvements. Non-payment by any party does not lead to higher charges for other crossing users.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the legislation, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. We may therefore be publishing the information you requested, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context, via the [Gov.uk website](http://www.gov.uk).

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review. Our internal review process is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure>

If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail info@highwaysengland.co.uk. You should contact me if you wish to complain.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote reference number CRS 723,131 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

Charging and Enforcement Policy Team Leader
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