

Our ref: CRS 722,176

Your ref:

via email

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

07 July 2015

Dear ██████████

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST - DART CHARGE

Thank you for your email dated 9 June 2015 under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requesting further information about the Dart Charge system. The specific details of your request have been extracted from your email and are highlighted in bold with our response below.

1. What are each of the companies below in charge of (in terms of their responsibilities and power) and how much are each being paid to do that job?

Under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, we are not required to provide information, which is already reasonably accessible to you.

a. Sanef

The Highways Agency awarded the main contract for vehicle detection, charging and enforcement management services to Sanef Operations Ltd on 26 September 2013.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20131203151016/http://www.highways.gov.uk/news/press-releases/major-contract-award-for-dartford-crossing-improvements/>

Sanef operates the Dart Charge service on behalf of Highways England and the Secretary of State for Transport. Decisions, which fall outside established regulation, policy and procedures, are referred to Highways England.

b. Highways England

Highways England formerly the Highways Agency is the new government owned company charged with operating England's motorways and major A roads.

<http://www.highways.gov.uk/highways-england/>

Information on our accounts can be found via the following link -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/438016/S150097_HA_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2014-15_-_web.pdf

c. DartCharge

Dart Charge is a registered trademark and is the identity given to the remote payments introduced from November 2014.

<https://www.gov.uk/search-for-trademark> - 0000 3045499

d. Any other parties involved

NSL – contracted to Sanef to provide administrative support to the enforcement process. They deal with representations made in response Penalty Charge Notices issued and the escalation and enforcement of representations which are rejected.

DVLA – Provides vehicle and keeper details

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency>

Traffic Enforcement Centre - <https://www.justice.gov.uk/courts/northampton-business-centre/traffic-enforcement-centre>

Traffic Penalty Tribunal –considers appeal against penalties -

<http://www.trafficpenaltytribunal.gov.uk/>

Connect Plus – responsible for the day to day maintenance and construction works at the crossing - <http://www.connectplum25.co.uk/connectplus/works/dart-change/>

Enforcement Agents – responsible for the recovery of debt

2. How many instances of legal action have been taken up against DartCharge?

No legal action has been taken up against Dart Charge. Please refer to the answer to question 1c.

3. How much are the following mistakes costing DartCharge to rectify?

- a. Double Charging**
- b. PCNs for trailers of HGVs**
- c. Incorrect images – Wrong vehicles sent PCNs**
- d. PCNs sent out for transactions paid for previously**

It is not possible to quantify the costs for rectifying the issues referred to in your question. All representations made in respect of PCNs are considered on their merits and are either rejected or accepted. Similarly, if it is identified that liability for a contravention should be transferred to another party, this is also dealt with as part of the day-to-day operation of the business.

4. How many DartCharge accounts have been incorrectly closed and had to be re-opened due to a faulty top-up system?

There is no evidence to suggest that any accounts have been incorrectly closed due to a faulty top up system.

5. How many crossings have been made (since 30/11/14 and on average per day):

a. In chargeable periods

Between the 30 November and 8 June, 23,110,615 crossings have been made within the chargeable period (daily average 121,635).

b. In non-chargeable periods

For the same period identified above at answer 5a, 3,087,863 crossings have been made outside of the chargeable hours

c. By HGVs (plus the percentage this represents of all crossings

There have been 2,735,104 crossings recorded by multi axle vehicles during the chargeable hours, which equates to 11.8% of all chargeable crossings.

We do not collect specific class details outside of the chargeable hours; to do so would breach data protection guidance.

6. Following the results above, how many of these crossings have been missed by your cameras?

We can confirm that 0.6% of crossings cannot be detected due to poor image or where the vehicle cannot be identified.

A further 0.1% cannot be charged as a result of damaged vehicle registration plates or deliberately obscured plates.

7. How many PCNs have you got in a 'back-log' that are yet to be sent out?

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

8. How many crossings have been made by foreign HGVs and the vehicle registration has had to been checked manually by a member of staff?

Here we have assumed that you are referring to the manual review of images taken of foreign registered vehicles in line with your question below. In this context , we can confirm that images from 637,059 crossings have been reviewed.

9. How many of these manually entered foreign HGV crossings have had to be disregarded due to illegible images?

For the period of this request, we can confirm that 456 images of foreign registered HGVs have been disregarded on the basis that they are illegible. When placed in the context of the number of HGVs using the crossing this equates to 0.01% of the total.

10. How many foreign vehicles do you estimate have used the crossing but were not charge at all?

We do not have the data to answer this question. To provide some context, I can confirm that **all** vehicles (unless classified as exempt by virtue of legislation) using the crossings during the hours of 6am – 10pm are required to pay the road user charge regardless of the country of registration.

There are also no restrictions outside of the charging hours to prevent any vehicle including foreign registered vehicles from using the crossing at no charge.

11. How many exempt vehicles do you have on your system?

There are 28,144 vehicles falling into various exempt categories registered in accounts on the Dart Charge system.

12. How many vehicles were changed from exempt to not exempt during your last DVLA 'sweep'?

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) is the custodian of all records of driver and vehicle registrations. Disclosure of registered keeper details are required in order to operate the Dart Charge Scheme in accordance with the A282 Trunk Road (Dartford-Thurrock Crossing Charging Scheme) Order 2013 which is provided to Highways England and its Service Provider on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding which sets out the agreed terms under which it is shared.

We are unable to provide information on the number of vehicles that changed from exempt to not exempt as this data is owned by DVLA.

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](https://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 722,176 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted name]

Charging and Enforcement Policy Team Leader
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