



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Consular Directorate

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2 October 2015

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST: FOI 0886-15

Thank you for your letter of 28 August 2015.

The Request

You asked for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You requested statistics on the numbers of British nationals in prisons visited by consular staff in the last 12 months and the numbers of those referred to the National Crime Agency (NCA).

Outcome of Search for Information and Disclosure

Your request has been considered under the FOIA and I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) holds some information relevant to your request.

1. Statistics of the Number of British Nationals (BNs) in Detention in the Republic of Ireland and who were visited over the Last 12 Months

The spreadsheet attached sets out the number of BNs who were detained in the Republic of Ireland, recorded for each month from September 2014. We are not able to provide an overall total as some BNs will have been released since their detentions, the details of which not available centrally on our database.

We are not able to confirm how many times each of these BNs were visited as we do not record this information centrally; such information is personal to those BNs.

Our general policy is that consular staff contact the prisoner (by telephone or in person) **within 24 hours** of being notified. We will aim to visit all BNs within 24 hours of us being informed of their detention but only if they wish us to do so. Thereafter our policy is to visit every 12 weeks, if the BN consents to it and consular access has been given to us by the local authorities. We also visit a prisoner once after sentencing and assess prison conditions. Some detainees refuse consular visits; others ask for additional visits. If BNs are in breach of our customer charter we can withhold consular visits and instead provide consular assistance by telephone or email.

For your further information I am enclosing a copy of our current guide which sets out our support for BNs abroad.

2. Statistics of the number of Prisoners detained in the Republic of Ireland whose cases were referred to the National Crime Agency

This is exempt under section 23(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 23(1) relates to information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters. Section 23 is an absolute exemption and therefore we are not obliged to consider the public interest in disclosure. I am therefore unable to comply with this element of your request.

Other Information withheld

We have respected the confidentiality of third parties by withholding information relating to them as appropriate, as disclosing such information would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act 1998.

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Yours sincerely,

Desk Officer

FOI/DPA Team

Consular Directorate

