



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Finance Directorate**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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16 November 2017

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: FOI 1074-17**

Thank you for your email of 13 November 2017 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked for:

- 1. The number of fruitless payments (payments for which liability not to have been incurred or whether the demand for the goods and services in questions could have been cancelled in time to avoid liability) in excess of £30,000 made by or paid for by your department in the financial years: 2016-17 and 2017-18.*
- 2. What each payment was for*
- 3. The value of each payment*
- 4. The reason why the payment was made*
- 5. The reason why the payment was classified as fruitless*
- 6. Whether any disciplinary action was taken as a result of the payment (if there was any disciplinary action, please specify what the action was)*

A fruitless payment, defined by Her Majesty's Treasury in their July 2013 publication "Managing Public Money," is a payment which cannot be avoided because the recipient is entitled to it even though nothing of use to the department will be received in return.

### **For financial year (i) 2016/17**

There were no Fruitless Payment in 2016/17 in excess of £30,000.

### **For financial year (ii) 2017/18**

The information you have requested relating to 2017-18 is intended for future publication in the **Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18**, which

will be made available in due course on the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website. Information intended for future publication is exempt from release with this reply under Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 22 of the FOIA is a qualified exemption which is subject to the public interest test. We have considered the public interest in releasing the information against the interest of withholding it:

there is a public interest in demonstrating transparency by releasing the information with this reply. However, we can also achieve transparency by the Government publishing this information on the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website;

there is a public interest in government departments providing information they hold that falls within the scope of a freedom of information request as quickly as possible. However, we need to balance this with the public interest in government ensuring that the information provided is full and accurate. As the FCO Accounts for 2017-18 have not yet been agreed and signed off, we could not guarantee that information we provided now would be full and accurate, but the FCO Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18, when published, will have this assurance.

We have therefore concluded that the public interest in withholding this information in our response to your request outweighs the public interest in releasing it.

Yours sincerely,

Business Planning Team  
Finance 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.