



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Consular Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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10 March 2017

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: FOI 0187-17

Thank you for your email of 17 February 2017 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You wrote:

- 1. The number of minors abducted from the UK by their parents, with dual nationality in the last 5 years.*
- 2. What nationality (as well as British) did they hold?*
- 3. The number of cases where the Home Office succeeded in returning a child to the UK, the number where they did not succeed and the number of cases that are ongoing.*
- 4. Whether there was any indication in any of the cases that the child was being held against their will.*

Outcome of search

We have now completed the search for the information you request and I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

Q1 - The table below shows the total number of minors abducted from the UK by parents, with dual nationality in the last 5 years.

Age group	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
0-15	<=5	<=5	<=5	<=5	<=5
16-18	0	0	0	0	<=5

This data has been collected from the FCO's global consular assistance database, and includes cases that were recorded by consular officers where the main or secondary reason that consular assistance was provided was in connection with child abduction or child custody.



It is also possible to obtain our statistics on the gov.uk website – the link for this is as follows: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/consular-data> This information is available by month, for each of our diplomatic missions overseas.

Please note that where the number of reported cases is less than or equal to five, these are annotated as <=5, to avoid the risk of identifying the individuals concerned. To release this data would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances Sections 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. 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, S.40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Q2 & Q4 – Withheld Information (Exceptions applied). Section 40 - Personal information. The information found contained personal data relating to third parties, the disclosure of which would contravene one of the data protection principles. In such circumstances sections 40 (2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act apply. In this case, our view is that disclosure would breach the first data protection principle. This state's personal data should be processed fairly and lawfully. It is the fairness aspect of this principle, in our view, that would be breached by disclosure. In such circumstances, s. 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. There is, therefore, no public interest test to apply.

Q3 – The Ministry of Justice is the lead department for the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction and you may find it more useful to request information from them. You may also wish to contact the Central Authorities for the Hague Convention on International Child Abduction. Contact details for the Central Authorities are available on the following link:

<https://www.hcch.net/en/states/authorities/details3/?aid=132>

Some statistics are available through the Annual Report of the Official Solicitor and Public Trustee's office, published at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ospt-annual-reports-and-accounts>.

Disclosure

There is no requirement for child abductions to be reported to the FCO. We are only aware of cases where someone has contacted our Consular service for advice and therefore this data is unlikely to be representative of the number of child abductions which have occurred. There may be additional cases of dual nationality which were not declared to us.



Consular FOI/DPA Team
Consular 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.