



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

FCO Services
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24 December 2019

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 1243-18

Thank you for your email of 7th October 2018 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. I apologise for the delay.

You asked for information on how much it costs the FCO / FCO Services to fully train a Secure Technical Services Officer (STSO) previously known as Technical Management Officer (TMO). Specifically, for this purpose, I would like this information to reflect officers at the B3 Grade or Junior STSOs operating out of Hanslope Park but deployed globally. It is likely the job title has changed several times but the roles will still be the same. A change of name over time from TMO to STSO and subsequent titles should not be a stumbling block to providing this Freedom of Information request as the job role changes little year by year and is easily identifiable.

I would like to know how the cost of training these officers changed between the start of Financial Year (FY) 2005 and the end of FY 2015. Clearly varying Service Level Agreements (SLA) will have an affect the way things are done, one example being the roll-out of Project Echo in 2011 / 2012, which moves certain job roles from STSOs into the private sector under contract to companies such as Mitel. One significant factor where I expect to see swings in the figures will be during recruitment freezes and government cuts due to Austerity. Things such as the Spending Review 2010 is likely to show a stepped change in training costs. Where the graph shows such stepped changes, I would like to receive a brief synopsis on what is thought to have contributed the stepped change.

Ultimately what I need is a cost per STSO as if they have been brought in to the FCO / FCOS from other sectors, departments or newly recruited from college / university. As the STSO role includes maintaining a broad range of equipment from Intruder Detection, Access Control to various CCTV systems and much more, to get someone up to a deployable position fully trained is not going to be cheap. I was advised in 2005 that the figure for fully training a TMO (as they were then called) was £250,000, which seems about right, but I would like to know what the true official figures are over the ten year period in question and how that figure has varied year to year.

To get these figures it should be a straight forward case of using Prism to divide the easily identifiable annual expenditure / budget by the number of STSOs / TMOs deployed in Missions around the world. I would expect these figures to already have been calculated for internal management purposes, and readily at hand.

For this Freedom of Information request, it is not necessary to include the costs of Developed Vetting (DV) as part of the expenditure.

I expect much of this analysis to already have been done and the data to be readily available. As such, I anticipate the cost of answering this Freedom of Information request to be minimal.

I am writing to confirm that FCO Services and the FCO have now completed the search for the information which you requested. FCO Services does hold information relevant to your request. The FCO does not hold information relevant to your request.

FCO Services can provide the current cost of the complete set of training requirements for an STSO. FCO Services cannot provide costs for previous years or the analysis asked for in the request above as we do not have this information.

All STSOs are already qualified up to BTEC level 3 prior to joining and then they receive 67 days in-house training, which covers a range of topics including Health and Safety and First Aid courses, which must be completed. In addition, for people with little or no experience, there is on the job training with an experienced STSO.

The in-house training costs £250 per student per day. The total cost of courses per student is £16,750. FCO Services cannot quantify the cost of on the job training as this would differ for each person.

If you would like a review of our decision, or if you wish to make a complaint, please write to the FOI and DPA Team, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Room WH2.177, King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AH. E-mail: foi-dpa.imd@fco.gov.uk. You have 40 working days to do so from the date of this letter.

You can apply directly to the Information Commissioner. However, the Information Commissioner will not normally make a decision unless you have first exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the FCO. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely,

Case Manager
Parliamentary, Ministerial and Central Services (PMCS)

