



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

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**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 0833-14**

Thank you for your email of 26 August asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

*We would like to request information about BAME diversity within the civil service.*

*In order to assist you with this request, I am outlining my query as specifically as possible.*

- 1. How many BAME staff do you currently employ within your organisation?*
- 2. How many women do you currently employ within your organisation?*
- 3. How many BAME staff do you currently employ in senior management positions i.e. over pay grade 6?*
- 4. How many women do you currently employ in senior management positions i.e. over pay grade 6?*
- 5. Could we please have a breakdown of the different ethnic groups within your senior management positions?*
- 6. Of the BAME people you have in senior management positions how long have they been employed by you?*
- 7. How many active schemes to improve diversity do you have within your workplace and how many schemes to encourage future senior BAME employees?*

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request.

**1. How many BAME staff do you currently employ within your organisation?**

A total of 3,295 FCO staff have made a voluntary declaration of their ethnicity. Declarations are not compulsory and therefore not all staff have acknowledged their ethnicity. Of those that have declared, 410 have self declared their ethnicity as BME. We have not included our Locally Engaged staff in this total, as we are required to report diversity data centrally on UK Civil Servants only.

**2. How many women do you currently employ within your organisation?**

Of the 4590 UK Based Officers we employ, 1972 are female. We employ a further 9128 Local Staff at our missions overseas, 4133 of which are female.

**3. How many BAME staff do you currently employ in senior management positions i.e. over pay grade 6?**

We have taken this to mean staff in the Senior Civil Service (SCS) grades. 13 of our SCS staff have voluntarily declared their ethnicity as BME.

**4. How many women do you currently employ in senior management positions i.e. over pay grade 6?**

Again, we have taken this to mean staff in the Senior Civil Service (SCS) grades. We currently have 105 female officers in SCS grades.

**5. Could we please have a breakdown of the different ethnic groups within your senior management positions?**

Due to the small number, we have withheld this information under Section 40 of the FOI Act. It is our opinion that providing this information would breach our responsibilities under section 2(a) of the Data Protection Act 1998, to protect the racial or ethnic origin of the data subjects. Section 40(2) and (3) of the Freedom of Information Act therefore apply. In such circumstances section 40 confers an absolute exemption on disclosure. We do not therefore have to apply the public interest test.

In the spirit of openness, I can confirm that 10 of the 13 are from Asian backgrounds.

**6. Of the BAME people you have in senior management positions how long have they been employed by you?**

Of the staff who have voluntarily declared their ethnicity as BME, 2 Officers were first employed by the FCO between 10 and 15 years ago, 8 between 15-20 years ago, 1 between 20-25 years ago while 2 were employed over 30 years ago.

**7. How many active schemes to improve diversity do you have within your workplace and how many schemes to encourage future senior BAME employees?**

Strengthening diversity and inclusion at all levels is a priority for the FCO. It's about reflecting the UK population, enhancing our reputation and supporting better policy

formulation and service delivery, whether it's on the Middle East or helping out a British National overseas. A more diverse FCO also gives us a better understanding of the people we represent and work for. Our goal is a truly inclusive and diverse workforce in which British people of all backgrounds, ages, race, gender and sexual orientation, and people with disabilities, are able to fulfil their potential.

All FCO staff are encouraged to take part in Learning and Development (L&D) activities and be proactive in their own self-development. To support L&D opportunities for staff with disabilities, reasonable adjustments can be requested. FCO staff also have access to Civil Service Learning (CSL) for generic L&D courses.

All staff are required to complete mandatory Diversity e-learning. Unconscious bias awareness e-learning is also recommended for all staff and is compulsory for all line managers, HR practitioners and anyone involved in recruitment or staff development. Disability Awareness and LGBT awareness training is also available.

Senior members of the FCO, including the PUS, and Board members have also ran learning sets aimed at staff from underrepresented groups. In 2013, a senior mentoring programme for 'near miss' promotion candidates from junior grades from underrepresented groups was also set up. The FCO also runs targeted development courses for Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) staff in the office. In addition, all staff from underrepresented groups have the opportunity to apply to attend external leadership seminars or events. The FCO also participates in the Cross Whitehall Positive Action Pathway "levelling the playing field" scheme, which aims to develop talent in junior grades from within key protected groups.

In terms of specific development programmes for BME staff we offer the following:

- In Summer 2013, the FCO launched the BME Campaign aimed at the recruitment, progression and development of BME staff. The campaign aims to improve young people's understanding of the organisation and to encourage more applications to our fast stream, particularly from BME communities. It also includes a leadership programme for high performing BME staff to prepare them for senior management and other targeted career development courses, mentoring and coaching. The initial results have been very encouraging.
- The Band D (the grade just below the FCO senior management structure (SMS)), Leadership Programme was introduced under the umbrella of the BME Campaign aimed at the recruitment, progression and development of ethnic minorities in the FCO. The 9 month programme for 13 high-performing Band D BME officers is a mixture of coaching, sponsorship, access to CSL master classes, leadership learning set, and round table discussions with senior BME role models.
- Again as part of the BME Campaign, we offer career development workshops for Bands A-C (November 2013 and November 2014 TBC) with follow-up coaching and mentoring, and we organised a speed-mentoring for BME staff in March 2014. We will also work closely with the newly established Diplomatic Academy to ensure that BME staff are given every opportunity to access learning.
- In addition to internal programmes we facilitate access to external events e.g. six places for annual BME into Leadership Conference organised by FDA (the professional association and union for the UK's senior public servants and

professionals) and Dods, and we encourage staff to join civil service programmes like the positive action pathway and the Minority Ethnic Talent association (META) growing talent mentoring scheme.

Further information on FCO initiatives to promote diversity and equality is available in the [FCO's Diversity and Equality Report](#).

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless it is exempt. The information we have supplied to you may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

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Yours sincerely,

Human Resources Directorate



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