



Foreign &  
Commonwealth  
Office

**Human Resources Directorate**  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

13 August 2015

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: FOI 0678-15**

Thank you for your email of 27 February 2015 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

- 1. As part of a response to a Parliamentary Written Answer [Ref 275463 : 15 May 2009 : Column 1066W] you provided a table showing the accompanied and unaccompanied Diplomatic Service Compensation Allowance.; (DSCA) that was paid to your staff as of 1.1.2009. Please could you provide me with an updated table.*
- 2. Could you also provide me with a table showing the varying levels paid at different locations as the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA).*
- 3. For each of the last three financial years please state what the total cost was to the FCO of paying (i) DSCA and (ii) COLA?*

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.

Some of the information you have requested (in your first and second questions) is being withheld under Section 43(2) of the FOIA. Section 43(2) protects information which would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

In applying section 43 we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing it.

The use of this exemption was carefully considered. The factors in favour of disclosure of this information, including the general public interest and greater transparency and

accountability, were carefully weighed against the need to allow business-people and commercial organisations the space to conduct their lawful business competitively and without fear of disclosure of sensitive commercial information. We consider that this transparency also poses risks to the protection of commercially confidential information. Failure to protect such commercially sensitive information could limit the number of companies willing to provide their services to the FCO, reducing our ability to keep our costs down. In this case after such consideration we believe that the public interest in withholding the redacted information outweighs the public interest in its release.

For these reasons, we consider that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

Both the DSCA (Hardship element) and Cost of Living Addition (COLA) are calculated on behalf of the FCO by Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA), an independent company that provides similar services to other governments, non-government organisations and multi-national companies. Although these tables have been released previously, as noted in the first part of your question, this was an error on our part as it breached commercial confidentiality. Releasing the current rates could further compromise ECA's position in this specialist market.

The Diplomatic Service Compensation Allowance (DSCA) comprises of three elements:

- Diplomatic Service Allowance which compensates staff for the cost of unforeseen circumstances and added expenditure over a career resulting from the frequent changes of job, location and environment (it is paid at a lower rate to partners Across Government in recognition of the lower frequency of such disturbances);
- Hardship which compensates staff for the additional costs of maintaining quality of life at hardship Posts and;
- Spouse/ Partner Pension Compensation which compensates those staff whose partners have a long term commitment to full global mobility and to recognise the impact this has on the partner's ability to follow a career and to contribute to a UK pension scheme.

The Diplomatic Service Allowance rates for 2015 are:

DSA 2015 – All FCO officers		
GRADE	TOTAL	TOTAL
	VALUE	VALUE
	<u>MARRIED</u>	<u>SINGLE</u>
SMS3/4	£17,257	£8,629
SMS1/2	£12,300	£6,149
D6/D7	£9,013	£4,663
C4/C5	£6,777	£3,545
B3	£4,445	£2,378
A2	£3,909	£2,111

DSA 2015 – Other Government staff & officers on fixed term appointments		
GRADE	TOTAL VALUE	TOTAL VALUE
	<u>MARRIED</u>	<u>SINGLE</u>
SMS3/4	£8,629	£4,315
SMS1/2	£6,149	£3,074
D6/D7	£4,663	£2,488
C4/C5	£3,545	£1,928

FCO Global Relief Staff		
Year 2015		
Grade	<u>MARRIED</u>	<u>SINGLE</u>
B3	£6,668	£4,756
A2	£5,864	£4,222

The Spouse/Partner Pension Compensation rate for 2015 is £2,922.

I attach a list of those Posts eligible for Hardship Allowance in 2015.

Although DSCA comprises of three elements, it is paid as a single amount calculated on the DSA rate, Spouse/Partner Pension Compensation rate and, where applicable, the Hardship rate. We currently do not have the relevant data in order to calculate the amount spent on each element on an annual basis. As such, the annual amount of spend on DSCA reflects all three elements.

In relation to your third question, the amount spent on both DSCA and COLA for the last three financial years is shown in the table below.

	2012/13	2013/2014	2014/2015
DSCA	£20,346,492	£20,940,218	£20,489,235
COLA	£17,611,493	£18,171,000	£14,576,406

Once an FOI request is answered, it is considered to be in the public domain. To promote transparency, we may now publish the response and any material released on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) in the [FOI releases](#) section. All personal information in the letter will be removed before publishing.

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Yours sincerely,

International Allowances  
International HR



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.

## Hardship Rates for 2015

Post
Abidjan
Abu Dhabi
Abuja
Accra
Adamstown (Pitcairn)
Addis Ababa
Ahmedabad
Al Khobar
Alexandria
Algiers
Almaty
Amman
Ankara
Antananarivo
Ascension Island
Ashgabat
Asmara
Astana
Asuncion
Athens
Baghdad
Baku
Bamako
Bandar Seri Begawan
Bangalore
Bangkok
Banja Luka
Banjul
Beijing
Beirut
Belgrade
Belmopan
Belo Horizonte
Bishkek
Bogota
Brasilia
Bucharest
Buenos Aires
Bujumbura
Cairo
Cape Town
Caracas

Casablanca
Castries
Chandigarh
Chennai
Chiang Mai
Chisinau
Chongqing
Colombo
Conakry
Dakar
Damascus
Dar es Salaam
Dhaka
Dili
Doha
Dubai
Durban
Dushanbe
Ekaterinburg
Erbil
Freetown
Gaborone
Georgetown
Goma
Grand Cayman
Grand Turk
Guangzhou
Guatemala City
Hanoi
Harare
Hargeisa
Havana
Ho Chi Minh City
Honiara
Hyderabad
Islamabad
Istanbul
Jakarta
Jedda
Jerusalem
Johannesburg
Juba
Kabul

Kampala
Kandahar
Karachi
Kathmandu
Khartoum
Kiev
Kigali
Kingston
Kinshasa
Kolkata
Kuala Lumpur
Kuching
Kuwait
La Paz
Lagos
Lashkar Gah
Lilongwe
Lima
Luanda
Lusaka
Managua
Manama
Manila
Maputo
Maseru
Mbabane
Mexico City
Minsk
Mogadishu
Monrovia
Monterrey
Moscow
Mumbai
Muscat
Nairobi
Nanjing
Nassau
N'Djamena
New Delhi
Nouakchott
Nuku'alofa
Panama City
Phnom Penh

Plymouth (Montserrat - Plymouth itself no longer exists)
Podgorica
Port Louis
Port Moresby
Port of Spain
Port Vila
Port-au-Prince
Pretoria
Pristina
Pyongyang
Quito
Rabat
Rangoon
Rio de Janeiro
Riyadh
San Jose
San Salvador
Sanaa
Santo Domingo
Sao Paulo
Sarajevo
Shanghai
Sofia
St George's
St Helena
St John's
St Petersburg
Suva
Taipei
Tarawa
Tashkent
Tbilisi
Tegucigalpa
Tehran
Tel Aviv
The Valley (Anguilla)
Tirana
Tripoli
Tristan da Cunha
Tunis
Ulaanbaatar
Victoria
Vientiane

Windhoek
Wuhan
Yaounde
Yerevan

