

20 September 2023

Case Reference IC-254294-Z9B1

Your request

You asked us for the following:

“Please include the following information, for the 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 financial years:

The number of staff, per year, given permission to work from abroad

For each member of staff granted permission, please provide their pay band, the country they have been allowed to work from, the length of time that they have been allowed to work for and the dates they were allowed to work from abroad. Please also provide the reason. If any of this is not possible to provide, please provide the remaining information”

Where your questions satisfy the criteria of a valid information request, we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Our response

We can confirm that we hold some information within scope of your request. However, you should be aware of the following limitations in what we can provide:

Our Travel Overseas Guidance policy stipulates that:

In general, you can work in another country provided you meet the requirements of the HR Homeworking Policy. In summary:

- *Your line manager must authorise overseas working*
- *Authorisation is for a defined period only (and is not a permanent relocation)*
- *Your availability is not limited (for example, if time differences were to cause an issue, or you are required to attend the office or another event in person).*
- *You have suitable internet connectivity*
- *There are no security concerns about the country you are working in*

The departmental responsibility for granting permission to work abroad means that the only central record kept is by our IT

department for the purposes of making security adjustments to network access on our devices. The information needed for this purpose is limited and may not produce the specified information in which you are interested.

Please note also that the above extract from the policy stipulates that working abroad is a temporary arrangement.

Please see the attached table produced from the core information provided by our IT department. The data relates to 113 individuals, though several entries may relate to one individual. The ICO began to collate this data from July 2020.

Where it was recorded, the date of the trip is included. However, this has not always been recorded and so providing a reliable breakdown of the data by financial year has not been possible. Similarly, the record of permission does not require members of staff to state their grade at the time of travel. We have been able to include a grade but only for each member of staff as recorded *now*, or at the time of leaving the organisation, rather than at the time of travel.

Where permission has been granted to work abroad when the trip is related to official business, for example conferences, the employment grade, location of travel and time period (as recorded) have been provided.

Where permission has been granted to work abroad when traveling for personal reasons, we have redacted the country of travel under section 40(2) of the FOIA as it relates to the personal data of potentially identifiable individuals.

Again, as stated in the above policy, the criteria for being granted permission to work abroad does not include the 'reason' for travel. We are therefore only able to confirm whether the trip was clearly for 'official' reasons or 'personal'.

This concludes our response.

We hope you find this information helpful.