



# HM TREASURY

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Information Rights Unit

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Alastair Manderson

Via e-mail to:

[www.hm-treasury.gov.uk](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk)  
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request-669-  
ce4d2xxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Ref: IRU/ 8/324  
CEU email 09591/2008

26 June 08

Dear Mr Manderson

## Freedom of Information Act request: prisoners- per capita expenditure

Thank you for your enquiry dated 4 June 2008 which we received on 5 June 2008. I am treating your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked for information covering –

- The average amount of money allocated per prisoner held by HM Prison Service
- Whether this has increased or decreased since 2005

In order to respond to a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, a public authority is required to perform a reasonable search of recorded information. HM Treasury is unlikely to hold information matching your request as calculation of average allocation per head would require input from multiple records across multiple departments. However, although we are not aware of any information matching your request, initial searches of our records indicate many matches to keywords in your request. These terms are broad (including 'prisoner', 'cost', and 'average') and the nature of Treasury business means that these terms are used in many hundreds of documents both singly and in combination. We have refined our searches by combining terms in Boolean searches and limiting by time, but the number of matches revealed means that we estimate that this request would exceed the limit set in Regulations for the costs of replying to an FOI request.

For central government this limit is set at £600 and represents the estimated cost of one person spending three and a half working days in determining whether the Treasury holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act departments are not obliged to comply with requests in these circumstances. Therefore we will not be processing your request further.

Although we have been unable to identify relevant information from within our records, some information relating to your request has been published in responses by Home Office Ministers to Parliamentary Questions. The FOI Act does not oblige public authorities to re-issue information that is reasonably accessible (under section 21), but to help you locate this I have provided links to the relevant PQs below:



<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm071029/text/71029w0048.htm#07103034001115>

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070416/text/70416w0107.htm#07041956007254>

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070308/text/70308w0014.htm#07030877001453>

To assist you in formulating any new request to the Treasury, I should explain that HM Treasury's role in the allocation of public funds is to set the ground rules for the administration of public money. As part of this role the Treasury sets budgets for individual departments to meet ministers' fiscal policy objectives, and maintains the Financial Reporting Manual which sets the standards to which departments, non-departmental public bodies and other parts of the public sector publish annual reports and accounts. However, within the standards expected by Parliament, and subject to the overall control and direction of their ministers, departments have considerable freedom about how they organise, direct and manage the resources at their disposal, and it is for the Accounting Officer in each department, acting within ministers' instructions, to control and account for the department's business. Given the nature of the Treasury's role we do not always hold detailed information about departmental spending and for questions of detail it is usually more productive to go direct to the responsible spending department. In the case of spending on prison services you may wish to address requests to the Ministry of Justice. Information about how to make an information request to the Ministry of Justice is published on their website, at the link below:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/requestinginformation.htm>

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Correspondence and Enquiry Unit at the following address: [public.enquiries@hm-treasury.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@hm-treasury.gov.uk). It will be helpful to us if you remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

Melanie Scoulding  
**Information Rights Unit**

**Your Rights to Complain under the FOI Act**

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request an review of our decision, you should write within two months of the date of this letter to HM Treasury, Information Rights Unit, 2/S2, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ. email - [public.enquiries@hm-treasury.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@hm-treasury.gov.uk)

If you are not content with the outcome your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Treasury. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.