



Disclosure Team
Ministry of Justice
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Julian Shersby
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29 August 2018

Dear Mr Shersby

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – 180731012

Thank you for your request dated 31 July in which you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ):

Please can you confirm the current cost of using the PIN phone system for prison inmates as follows:-

1. In The Parkhurst section of HMP Isle of Wight please confirm the current per minute call cost plus any additional call connection cost per call charged to prisoners at both any peak (eg weekday or weekday daytime including the hours at which those charges apply) or offpeak (eg weekday evening or at weekends including the specific hours at which any lower charging rate applies) for calling standard UK landline phone numbers (commencing 01 or 02) and for any landline phone numbers (commencing 07) that prisoners are authorised to call in their individual prison PIN phone accounts? Also if possible within the cost constraints of an FOI request please provide any earlier (probably higher) call cost rates for making such calls to landline and mobile phones from the Parkhurst section of HMP Isle of Wight using the PIN phone system over the last 20 years or such shorter time period as may readily easily be available so as not to exceed the cost limits of an FOI request.

2. Please confirm the same information as in point 1 regarding the cost of calls using the prison PIN phone system at peak and offpeak periods to landline (01/02) and mobile (07) phone numbers across all other prisons operated either directly by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service or by third party contractors such as G4S Security. If the current PIN phone call cost rate per minute is in fact the same at every prison in the UK (including the Parkhurst section of HMP Isle of Wight) then all that is requested is the applicable tariff rate (per minute and including any connection charge) at peak and off peak periods charged to prisoners for calling landline (01/02) or mobile (07) numbers. If however the call rate charged to prisoners for making calls to landline and mobile phones at peak and off peak periods using the PIN phone system varies by prison establishment then a complete break down of the current call cost to landline and mobile phones at peak and off peak periods by prison establishment is requested instead. Also if possible within the cost constraints of an FOI request please provide any earlier (probably higher) call cost rates for making such calls to landline and mobile phones at peak and off peak periods using the PIN

phone system that may have been charged over the last 20 years or any such shorter time periods as may readily easily be available so as not to exceed the cost limits of an individual FOI request.

3. Please provide any other currently applicable phone call cost rates paid by inmates at peak and off peak periods to landline (01/02) or mobile (07) phone numbers in prisons within the UK either directly operated by or operating under contract to Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service by third party contractors (eg G4S) that do not operate the PIN phone account system for prisoners but operate some other mechanism for charging prisoners to make outgoing phone calls. Also if possible within the cost constraints of an FOI request please provide any earlier (probably higher) call cost rates for making such calls to landline and mobile phones at peak and off peak periods using phone systems other than the PIN phone system that may have been charged over the last 20 years or during such shorter time period as may readily easily be available so as not to exceed the cost limits of an individual FOI request.

4. On a prison by prison basis within Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (whether in directly operated prisons or those operated under contract to HMPPS) please state the maximum length of phone call currently permitted (if any such maximum length of call time is in fact applicable) to each of the following categories of prisoners:-

- A. Entry Privileges Prisoners
- B. Basic Privileges Prisoners
- C. Standard Privileges Prisoner
- D. Enhanced Privileges Prisoners

Also if possible within the cost constraints of an FOI request on a prison by prison basis (whether in directly operated prisons or those operated under contract to HMPPS) please provide any historical information that may be available over the last 20 years (or for such shorter time period during which historic call time restrictions may readily be available) indicating previous maximum lengths of phone calls that may have been permitted to the following classes of prisoners or their the nearest historical equivalent prisoner classification groups.

- A. Entry Privileges Prisoners
- B. Basic Privileges Prisoners
- C. Standard Privileges Prisoners
- D. Enhanced Privileges Prisoners

However in respect of requests 3 and 4 if the length of maximum time permitted for outgoing phone calls currently is and has always been the same across all prisons of a given prison type (eg Category A, Category B, Category C and Category D) operated by or under contract to HM Prison & Probation Service or its antecedents then it would be satisfactory to simply provide the maximum length of phone call time permitted for different classes of prisoner (Entry, Basic, Standard or Enhanced) for each of the four different prison category types (Categories A to D inclusive). The Applicant is willing to discuss varying his request in any such manner as is practical to minimise the cost of making the above request so as to better fit in with the manner in which such data is actually currently held by Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service. However it should be noted that such a request has only been necessary in the first place because of the almost total lack of current transparency by HMPPS in making publicly available the rate of call costs that prisoners currently face to call either their friends or relatives.

Your request has been handled under the FOIA.

I can confirm that the MoJ holds the information that you have requested. However, some of the information is exempt from disclosure under section 21 of the FOIA, because it is reasonably accessible to you.

In regards to your questions 1, 2 and 3, we have recently provided this information to you in our response to FOI request 180731003 issued to you on 16 August. It is my understanding that we do not hold historical information dating back 20 years and would suggest contacting our provider who is responsible for setting the pin phone tariffs, British Telecom, who may be able to supply this to you.

With respect to question 4, prison rules require prisons to actively encourage prisoners to maintain outside contacts and meaningful family ties. Prisoners also have a statutory entitlement to send and receive letters. Letters and phone calls assist in sustaining supportive relationships with family and friends and being able to communicate with those outside is part of providing a safe and decent environment for prisoners and contributes to a reduction in self-harm and suicide.

As highlighted in our previous response to FOI 180731003, the Secretary of State for Justice recently announced plans to further roll out in cell telephones, which are already in place in 20 establishments, with plans to extend this to a further 20 over the next 2 years.

Prison Service Instruction (PSI) 30/2013 Incentives and Earned Privileges sets out the operational framework for all prisons and Young Offender Institutions in delivering the Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme and this is published on the Justice website and can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/offenders/psipso/psi-2013/psi-30-2013-1.doc>

Additionally, Prison Service Instruction (PSI) 49/2011, Prisoner Communication Services outlines the minimum statutory requirements and ensures that good order and discipline is maintained. Again this PSI is published on the Justice website and can be accessed via the following link <http://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/psis/prison-service-instructions-2011>

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within two months of the date of this response.

data.access@justice.gov.uk

Disclosure Team, Ministry of Justice, 10.38, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely

J Nicholson
Long Term and High Security Prisons Group.