



Vehicle & Operator Services Agency

From: **Information Access**
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Your ref:
Our ref: **F0003541**

Date: 19th September 2011

Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

I refer to your e-mail of 16th August 2011, in which you asked various questions in relation to Traffic Commissioners in Great Britain. We have dealt with your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked for:-

1. The Departmental policy on first class travel for Traffic Commissioners;
2. Whether Traffic Commissioners are entitled to first class travel as a right;
3. The reasons and financial justification in the present economic climate for the use of first class travel (if used); and
4. An itemised breakdown for all expenditure on Government credit cards used by Traffic and their secretaries/pa's.

In respect of points 1) to 3, Traffic Commissioners terms and conditions of appointment state that they are entitled to travel and subsistence expenses incurred and other expenses necessarily incurred on business in accordance with DfT Travel and Subsistence arrangements applying to senior staff of the Department. In the interests of being as helpful as possible, we have enclosed the most relevant part of the Department's staff handbook that includes at 9.1.12 and 9.1.13 the rules on the use of first class rail travel. This is attached to the covering e-mail.

Additionally, on 09 June 2010, DfT shared a note from Clare Moriarty, Director General, Corporate, with Traffic Commissioners. The Senior Traffic Commissioner confirmed, on 11 June 2010 and on behalf of all Traffic Commissioners, that they would be bound by the principles outlined in the document. On Business Travel and Subsistence the note stated:

"Do not travel unless absolutely necessary and avoid overnight stays. Video or teleconferences offer an alternative. If you have to travel, get your Team Leader's approval and always use the cheapest means possible:

- use public transport rather than private vehicles;
- travel standard class on trains - irrespective of grade - unless there are compelling reasons to travel first class or, exceptionally, a first class discount ticket is cheaper;
- travel economy class on planes;
- buy rail or air tickets in advance;
- do not use taxis unless there is no alternative, or you have luggage, or feel unsafe on public transport, eg late at night;
- do not use your own car if a pool, lease or hire car would be cheaper (100 mile journeys have been calculated as the approximate "tipping point" at which using your own car becomes more expensive than car hire); and
- if you hire a car, use the class specified in the car hire guidance.

In respect of point 4), I can confirm that no Traffic Commissioner holds (or has ever held) a Government Procurement (credit) Card. However of the seven Traffic Commissioners, cards have been issued to four of their personal secretaries and one to the administration assistant to the Senior Traffic Commissioner. All of these may include items/services purchased for a Traffic Commissioner. I have attached the relevant spreadsheet to the covering minute.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us, quoting reference **F0003541**.

If you are unhappy with the response provided, you may ask for an internal review. To request an internal review, please write, giving the reasons for your dissatisfaction, to:

VOSA Corporate Office,
Berkeley House,
Croydon Street,
Bristol,
BS5 0DA

or email vosa.corporateoffice@vosa.gsi.gov.uk

It will help us if you quote the reference number for your case.

If you do not agree with the outcome of the internal review, you may lodge an appeal with the Information Commissioner (www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk). The Information Commissioner is an independent official appointed by the Crown to oversee the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

The Information Commissioner can consider complaints about any aspect of the way in which requests for information have been handled. Please note: the Information Commissioner would be unlikely to consider your complaint if you have not first requested an internal review.

You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

VOSA Information Access Team