

By email to XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Department for Transport
Zone XXXXXX
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Web Site: www.dft.gov.uk

Our Ref: F0008786

18 April 2012

Dear XXXXXXXXX,

Freedom of Information Request F0008786

I am writing regarding your narrowed down request for information, received by email on 28 March 2012. In that request, you asked us the following questions:

- “1. How much money have you spent, specifically, on public relations (both in-house and external support) in each of the following years: 2011-2012 (including projected expenditure to the end of the fiscal year), 2010-2011, 2009-2010, 2008-2009, 2007-2008?”***
- 2. How much money has been projected to be spent, specifically, on public relations (both in-house and external support) in 2012-2013?***
- 3. How much money have you spent, specifically, on external public relations support in each of the following years: 2011-2012 (including projected expenditure to the end of the fiscal year), 2010-2011, 2009-2010, 2008-2009, 2007-2008?***
- 4. How much money has been projected to be spent, specifically, on external public relations support in 2012-2013?***
- 5. Which public relations agencies, specifically, have you employed or held on a roster in the following years: 2011-2012 (including projected agency use to the end of the fiscal year), 2010-2011, 2009-2010, 2008-2009, 2007-2008?***
- 6. Which public relations agencies, specifically, do you plan to employ or hold on a roster in 2012-2013?***
- 7. How many staff do you currently retain in your in-house communications department?***
- 8. How many staff did you retain in your in-house communications department in each of the following years: 2010-2011, 2009-2010, 2008-2009, 2007-2008?***
- 9. How many staff do you plan to retain in your in-house communications department by the end of the 2012-2013 fiscal year?***
- 10. How much money did you spend on your most expensive public relations campaign of the last five years, and what was the campaign?***
- 11. What is the name, job title, and yearly remuneration of your most senior public relations or communications official?”***

This narrowed down request followed our earlier response to you made under case reference number F0008698, where we explained we were unable to answer on cost grounds.

Having carefully considered your new request I'm afraid that we are also unable to provide this information within the £600 FOI cost limit covering the central department and our seven executive agencies for similar reasons given in our earlier reply.

Section 12 of the Act (the full text of which is attached at Annex A) does not oblige the Department to comply with requests that exceed this limit, and we are therefore refusing your request.

However, within the cost limit I have been able to find the following relevant information which is already in the public domain. I enclose the following links which I hope you will find useful:

DfT FOI response dated 29th September 2011 re: spend on press and communications in 2009/10 and 2010/11, how many press officers were employed in those years and which PR agencies were used:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/foi/dft-f0008037/letter.pdf>

Parliamentary Question response dated 17th November 2008 re: public relations companies who worked on the Department for Transport's marketing activities in 2007/08:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200708/ldhansrd/text/81117w0001.htm>

Parliamentary Question response dated 16th March 2010 re: how much the Department for Transport and its agencies spent on public relations consultants in 2007/08 and 2009/10:

http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldhansrd/text/100316w0003.htm#column_WA160

In addition to these links I can confirm that Nick Court is the most senior communications professional in the Department for Transport and his job title is Director of Group Communications. I include an updated link to the DfT organogram on which all the senior communications personnel are listed and re-iterate the link to DfT and Agency staff pay data:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/organisation-charts/>

<http://data.gov.uk/dataset/organogram-dft>)

If you send us a new, more specific request, we will consider if that can be dealt with within the limit. This will include further reducing the number of parts to your request as well as specifying a particular part of the Department that you are interested in receiving information from e.g. a particular agency or just the central Department and significantly reducing your time scales e.g. to the most recent completed financial year or seeking information about a specific campaign.

If you are unhappy with the way the Department has handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request you may complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter by writing to the Department's Information Rights Unit at:

Zone D/01
Ashdown House
Sedlescombe Road North
Hastings
East Sussex TN37 7GA
E-mail: FOI-Advice-Team-DFT@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Please see attached details of DfT's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact XXXXXXXX in our Press Office on XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Your right to complain to DfT and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested. In addition a complaint can be made that DfT has not complied with its FOI publication scheme.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will automatically be referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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

Annex A

Section 12 exemption:

Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

(2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.

(3) In subsections (1) and (2) “the appropriate limit” means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.

(4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority—

(a) by one person, or

(b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign,

the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.

(5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.