

Selection of the top 50

In identifying the top 50, the BBC has followed recent decisions of the Information Commissioner (including some relating to BBC personnel). The top 50 staff are those who meet the two-part test applied by the ICO in the BBC decisions: namely whether the individuals have significant responsibility for the expenditure of public funds and/or the creation of public policy. This includes such persons as those on the Executive Board of the BBC, with the remainder at the level of Controller, Head of Department or Director.

Individuals engaged by the BBC as talent have not been included in this list. This is also in line with a recent decision notice of the ICO where the Commissioner decided that unlike senior BBC employees, such as those listed in the appendix, the roles undertaken by “talent” did not relate to the performance of a public function involving the spending of public money and/or the taking of influential policy decisions. Consequently, individuals in those cases had a reasonable expectation that their personal data would not be disclosed and it would be unfair and a breach of section 40(2) of the Act to do so. We have therefore excluded any talent information from this list.

Information about Expenses

For the purposes of this FOI request, please note that “expenses” are those costs incurred personally by BBC staff and subsequently re-claimed through the BBC’s expenses system in accordance with the staff expenses policy. It is important to note that the BBC also operates a central booking system for arranging travel and transport for staff, including accommodation, flights, and taxis. This system involves using a small number of preferred suppliers in order to help maximize value for money to the BBC. Where bookings are made using this system all costs are settled directly by the BBC, without staff being required to incur any expenses individually. These costs are not therefore re-claimed by way of expenses.

You should be aware the BBC does not give any employee an “expense account”. Only costs that fall within the BBC’s expenses policy can be reclaimed and all are checked and authorised by a more senior figure or a member of the BBC Finance community.

From time to time senior managers are asked to personally meet the costs of items that the BBC does not regard as personal expenses. These could include, for example, the payment of a facility fee for a location, or paying a venue at the end of a departmental meeting or away-day off BBC premises. This is usually necessary where immediate payment is required and the BBC accounts system cannot be used. In many of these circumstances, BBC policy is for the most senior member of staff to settle the account, and the most convenient way of the BBC recompensing the manager for this expenditure is through the expenses system. For clarification, the differentiation on this point is made as follows: if the member of staff was present at an event and signed off as the most senior person present then it is shown in the column entitled "Incurred by myself". When the member of staff did not attend an event, but was signing off the expenditure as authorised by themselves, for example a departmental away-day at which they were not present, then these would be put into a second column entitled "Incurred by Department".

The BBC is a global organisation and senior leaders across all major organisations inevitably incur some expenses. Whilst expenses are common across all major organisations, the BBC has a rigorous expenses policy and we are careful to ensure value for money.

As well as the information contained in this release under the Freedom of Information Act, you may be interested to know that the BBC is committed to a programme of increasing transparency and accountability, particularly in relation to how it spends public money. We recently announced that the salaries and detailed expenses of the members of the BBC Direction Group would be regularly published from the autumn of this year, in line with the policy adopted by the BBC Trust. Further, from today, the 25th of June, the BBC will be publishing detailed expenses of the Executive Board for the past five financial years. The BBC is actively exploring how this might be significantly extended to give the public further detailed information, including greater disclosure of senior executives' pay and expenses, and more detailed information on how the BBC spends the licence fee, including areas such as total talent costs, taxis, flights etc. We will be announcing how we intend to do this in the near future.

Information published today on bbc.co.uk

The BBC has received a large number of requests from journalists and members of the public for expenses information and we recognise the significant public interest in this area. For this reason, we have decided to make an exception from our standard processes and immediately publish the information contained in this and other expenses related enquiries on the BBC FOI website, so that information released is available to all.

Appeal rights

You may request an internal review of our decision that your request exceeds the appropriate limit. You can either email xxx@xxx.xx.xx or write to BBC Information Policy & Compliance, Room 2252, BBC White City, 201 Wood Lane, London, W12 7TS. If you are not satisfied with the result of the internal review you then have the right to seek a further review from the Information Commissioner. Please see <http://www.ico.gov.uk> or contact the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, telephone 01625 545700 for details.

Yours sincerely,

James Leaton Gray
Head, Information Policy & Compliance