British Broadcasting Corporation Room BC2 A4 Broadcast Centre White City Wood Lane London W12 7TP
Telephone 020 8008 2882 Email foi@bbc.co.uk

Information Rights
bbc.co.uk/foi **bbc.co.uk/privacy**

Rachel Leonardi
request-624385-368e221e@whatdotheyknow.com

20 February 2020

Dear Ms Leonardi

Request for Information – RFI20200091

Thank you for your request to the BBC of 23rd January 2020 under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act') seeking the following information:

> *"Please could you inform me of the number of TV licences cancelled in 2019 (January 1st 2019 to 31st December 2019)"*

Please note that "TV Licensing" is a trade mark used by companies contracted by the BBC to administer the collection of television licence fees and enforcement of the television licensing system. The majority of the administration of TV Licensing is contracted to Capita Business Services Ltd ('Capita'). Over-the-counter services are provided by PayPoint plc ('PayPoint') in the UK, and by the Post Office in the Isle of Man and Channel Islands. Target Group ('Target') is the supplier for the Simple Payment Plan trial. Marketing and printing services are contracted to Proximity London Ltd. Media services are contracted to Havas Media Limited. The BBC is a public authority in respect of its television licensing functions and retains overall responsibility.

Please be advised the Act gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities; and that we are not required to create new information to respond to a request, or give a judgement or opinion that is not already recorded.

By way of background, licences can be cancelled for a variety of reasons by customers who no longer need a licence - for example, if they have moved into an address which already has one. Whilst TV Licensing management information is compiled by financial year, cancellations data is reported on a monthly basis.

A monthly breakdown of all cancellations for the 2018/19 financial year (including the months January 2019 to March 2019) is readily available on the TV Licensing website at https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/about/foi-licences-facts-and-figures-AB18.

Please note that our routine information terms some cancellations as expired, depending on the circumstances of the cancellation, and these are not reported as cancelled licences. Please also note that the information above relates to licences in force where the licence has been cancelled by TV Licensing as a result of payment failure, and by customers themselves. Therefore these figures cannot be taken to mean solely the number of licences cancelled by customers during this period

I can confirm that we hold monthly cancellations statistics for the remaining period specified in your request i.e. April 2019 to December 2019. However, please be advised that monthly cancellations figures are consolidated at the end of the financial year and intended to be published on the TV Licensing website, following the publication of the TV Licensing Annual Review in July each year. I am withholding the figures for the remaining months within the scope of your request i.e. April to November 2019 under section 22(1)(a) of the Act; which relates to information which is intended for future publication (specifically, that the information is held with a view to its being published by the BBC at a future date). Please note that this information is intended for publication on the TV Licensing website later this calendar year.

I am satisfied in terms of section 2(2) of the Act that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. I have provided further explanation of my consideration of the public interest in the section 'Why information has been withheld', below.

Why information has been withheld

I am required under section 2(2) of the Act to assess whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption used above outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

In favour of disclosure, there is a general public interest in providing further information about the BBC's television licensing activities which affect a large percentage of the general public.
In addition, I consider that the following factors are in favour of withholding the information:

1. That the publication of information by public authorities is a carefully planned and managed activity.

2. That the release of information generated for internal reporting only would not provide an accurate public understanding of television licensing before that information has been reviewed and consolidated.

In this instance, the public interest is served by maintaining the BBC's planning procedures. I am therefore satisfied in terms of section 2 of the Act that in all the circumstances of the case, the

public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest (outlined above) in disclosing the information.

If you are not satisfied that we have complied with the Act in responding to your request, you have the right to an internal review by a BBC senior manager or legal adviser. Please contact us at the address above, explaining what you would like us to review and including your reference number. A request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of receiving the BBC's response to your original request.

If you are not satisfied with the internal review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. The contact details are: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, Tel: 0303 123 1113 or see https://ico.org.uk/.

Yours sincerely

Rupinder Panesar
Freedom of Information Advisor, TV Licensing Management Team