

Freedom of Information  
Internal Review decision

Internal Reviewer	Douglas Marshall, Advisor, Information Policy and Compliance
Reference	IR2014023 (RFI20140399)
Date	9 May 2014

### Chronology

The applicant requested the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act') under cover of an email dated 9 March 2014 (RFI20140399):

*Under the Freedom of Information Act please provide the following information for December 2013:*

- 1. What was the cost of the ten most expensive bottles of wine or champagne bought by the BBC in December 2013? And please name each bottle individually.*
- 2. What was the cost of the ten most expensive meals bought by BBC staff on expenses for December 2013? Please name each restaurant/hotel individually.*

The BBC acknowledged the applicant's request on 10 March 2014.

Having not received a response to his request, the applicant asked for an internal review on 23 April 2014 stating

*I am writing to request an internal review of British Broadcasting Corporation's handling of my FOI request 'BBC Food, Drinks And Refreshment Expenses December 2013'.*

*This delay is unacceptable, please answer my request as soon as possible.*

The BBC acknowledged the applicant's request for internal review on 29 April 2014

### Issues on review

The purpose of the BBC's internal review procedure is to provide a fair and thorough review of the BBC's handling of the applicant's request and of decisions taken pursuant to the Act. The applicant's challenge appears to focus chiefly on the delay in responding to his request. Therefore, the scope of this review is limited to examining the reason for the delay in this case and whether or not the BBC has complied with the Act.

There are several reasons why a request may be delayed beyond the statutory time frame for compliance, (an unexpected increase in workload, difficulties in identifying and extracting the requested information, or the unavailability of relevant members of staff). In this case the relative difficulty in extracting the requested information, due to the broad scope of the applicant's request has required the input of several members of staff from across the organisation to ensure that a factually accurate response can be agreed. This has taken more than 20 working days.



## **Decision**

The BBC was required to respond to this request no later than 4 April 2014. It is clear the BBC did not do so, and therefore it has failed to adhere to section 10 of the Act.

The BBC has also not provided the applicant with any form of update as to when he could expect a response to his request. Whilst the BBC receives a high number of requests under the Act, this does not mean that the applicant should have had to wait so long to receive a response. On further investigation with the relevant department, I have ascertained that the BBC's response will be sent to the applicant within two weeks of the date of this internal review.

## **Appeal Rights**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your 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; Telephone 0303 123 1113 or [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)