

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk

Our Ref: FOI2019/20537

28 June 2019

Dear Alexander Tiffin,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 2 June. You asked:

I am writing to request what the total cost is estimated to be or, has been agreed for your recent and ongoing campaign regarding Debunking Universal Credit myths.

This includes but is NOT limited to

1) The total amount payable to The Metro Newspaper for the wraparound advertisement and nine weeks advertorials.

2) The total cost payable OR set aside for any online adverts such as the one that has appeared on the Mail Online.

3) The total cost paid to any agency for running this campaign.

4) Any further costs involved with the campaign.

Should you deem it too costly please limit it to points 1 & 2. However, all costs should be readily available do this is unlikely.

You have set a precedent on revealing advertising costs when you revealed the amount you paid to the production company of Gogglebox.

Given the high profile of the campaign, it also passes the public interest test as there is a lot interest.

DWP Response:

I can confirm that we hold the recorded information to respond to your request. However, we have considered your application and consider it to be exempt under certain sections of the Act. To take your requests in turn:

1) The total amount payable to The Metro Newspaper for the wraparound advertisement and nine weeks advertorials.

The Universal Credit Uncovered media partnership with the Metro is still underway so we are unable to provide accurate spend to date figures. However, we will publish the full spend on the partnership at the end of July once all activity has concluded. We therefore consider this part of your request exempt under section 22 as it specifically relates to information that is intended for publication at a future date.

2) The total cost payable OR set aside for any online adverts such as the one that has appeared on the Mail Online.

Online adverts form part of the overall Metro media partnership cost. Disclosing this information would be prejudicial to their commercial interests. We therefore consider this part of your request exempt under section 43(2) which provides that 'information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person'.

3) The total cost paid to any agency for running this campaign.

The Department procured the Metro through the Government's contracted media buying agency, as is standard practice and ensures value for money for the taxpayer. Direct management of the campaign was undertaken by the Department so no separate fee was paid to an outside agency to run the campaign and all advertorials were developed in partnership with the Metro.

4) Any further costs involved with the campaign.

There is no further spend associated with the campaign other than the overall partnership cost which we have committed to publish in July.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Department quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol Team

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF
Web: ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745