



Information Policy & Compliance
bbc.co.uk/foi bbc.co.uk/privacy

Ben Brown
Email to: request-182337-56f0d982@whatdotheyknow.com

2 December 2013

Dear Mr Brown,

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – RF120131578

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act ('the Act') of 25th October 2013, seeking:

“How much has the BBC spent each year, of the past 5 years, broken down by year, on staff ringing directory inquiries for telephone numbers?”

How much has the BBC spent each year, of the past 5 years, broken down by year, on staff ringing the speaking clock?”

The BBC's telephony services are provided under the BBC's Technology Framework Contract with Atos. Having consulted with the suppliers, we estimate that to deal with your requests in relation to calls made to directory inquiries and the speaking clock, would take more than two and a half days for each number; under section 12 of the Act, we are allowed to refuse to handle the request if it would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit has been set by the Regulations (SI 2004/3244) as being £450 (equivalent to two and a half days work, at an hourly rate of £25).

Your request requires us to check the records for the past 5 years for calls to directory inquiries and the speaking clock. Our suppliers advise us that they are unable to provide this information within two and a half days. This is not a standard report that can be produced at the push of a button, especially with the volume of data being requested to be pulled back over the time period in question.

Furthermore, records are only kept for a period of two years after which they are archived and will therefore take even longer to extract.

We can however advise you that the BBC recently requested a check on 3 months' worth of data which included the number of calls to the speaking clock. This check itself took around two days to collate. We are happy to share this information with you; below is an extract of 3 months' data giving the total number of calls per month to '123'. The BBC receives a flat rate of £0.45 per call.

Row Labels	Number of calls	Sum of Cost (£)
May-13	462	207.9
Jun-13	380	171
Jul-13	406	182.7
Grand Total	1248	561.6
Average call cost	0.45	

To put this in context, the BBC has around 22,000 staff and production teams occasionally use the speaking clock to ensure links are co-ordinated with live broadcasts.

Since conducting the research above, the BBC has now diverted all external speaking clock calls to an internal option, thereby avoiding any charge to the BBC, although if a valid business reason arises then teams can still be granted access to the external number.

If you would like to submit a narrowed request, we would be happy to consider it.

You may request an internal review of our decision that your request exceeds the appropriate limit. Please contact us at the address above, explaining what you would like us to review and including your reference number. 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, telephone 01625 545 700 or see <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

Yours sincerely,

Kate Leece
Head of Legal and Business Affairs
BBC Future Media and Technology

