



Cabinet Office

Room 401  
70 Whitehall  
London, SW1A 2AS

foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk  
[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

Dr Emma L Briant  
Via: request-732147-56f49caf@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref: IR2021/07533

24 May 2021

Dear Dr Emma L Briant

Cabinet Office Internal Review Reference: IR2021/07533  
(Original Case Reference: FOI2021/04392)

## REVIEW OF REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

Thank you for your email of 29 March 2021. You asked for an internal review of our response to your request for information sent to you on the same day. In your request you asked for:

*Was this article [<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9294945/How-three-British-businesses-flourishing-forge-new-relationship-EU.html>] sponsored by a Cabinet Office budget or another department?*

*How many such sponsored articles have been budgeted for in the Daily Mail and how much budget spend is allocated for this? Are third party companies/contractors involved in creating or distributing this PR?*

*The article describes a 'partnership with the UK Government' and the Daily Mail - please could I see any correspondence or other documents relating to this partnership held by the Cabinet Office.'*

I have carefully reviewed the handling of your request. In summary, I consider that the exemption at section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act ('the Act') was not properly applied to your request for the correspondence or other documents relating to this partnership. On review, I must inform you that the Cabinet Office is unable to comply with this part of your original request as it would exceed the cost limits under the Act to comply with it (section 12(1)).

Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act relieves public authorities of the duty to comply with a request for information if the cost of dealing with it would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit has been specified in regulations and for central Government this is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3 1/2 working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

Initial sample searches to locate the correspondence and documents related to the Press Partnership that you have requested have demonstrated that your request exceeds the cost

limit. Your request to see 'any correspondence or other documents relating to this partnership held by the Cabinet Office' requires locating and evaluating all Press Partnership documents, correspondence, and individual briefs in relation to the sponsorship between November 2020 to March 2021. Sourcing and evaluating this volume of information would involve numerous searches of inboxes and shared systems for locating and retrieving information, and extracting relevant information from its sources would exceed the limits set out under section 12(1) of the Act.

If you wish, you may refine your request so that the cost of determining whether the Cabinet Office holds relevant information, locating, retrieving and extracting it would be less likely to exceed the appropriate limit. If you were to refine your request further and ask for correspondence and documents related to one particular sponsored article, such as the one referenced in your original request: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9294945/How-three-British-businesses-flourishing-forge-new-relationship-EU.html>), we could most likely oblige within the Act. We would also recommend that you avoid terms like 'any' and 'related to', as these can be interpreted very broadly.

Please be aware that if the Cabinet Office does hold any information relevant to a refined request, it may be subject to one or more of the exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act.

With regard to part 'a' of your request for an internal review, the reason that we didn't answer this in our original response was because your request asked for how much budget had been allocated, which was supplied to you using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cabinet-office-spend-data>. However, we have noted in your internal review request, and later clarification, that you would like to know how many articles were purchased and the subject matter.

This information is held by the Cabinet Office. Between 1 November and 31 March, a total of 22 articles were published in the Daily Mail. Of these, 5 related to UK Transition with 17 focused on COVID-19.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request for information you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

Rachel Anderson  
Head of Freedom of Information  
Cabinet Office