



Information Rights

bbc.co.uk/foi bbc.co.uk/privacy

Peter Jones

request-620717-7260bfa1@whatdotheyknow.com

16 December 2019

Dear Mr Jones

Request for Information – RF120191837

Thank you for your request to the BBC of 16th November 2019 under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act') seeking the following information

“Please provide the following information held by the BBC since 1st January 2016:

- 1. The number paperless (e.g. electronic) TV licences issued. Please provide this as an annual breakdown.*
- 2. The number of TV Licensing letters sent to holders of paperless TV licences. Please provide this as an annual breakdown.*
- 3. A copy of the letter sent to new paperless TV licence holders to inform them that a paperless TV licence has been set up.*
- 4. The number of paper (e.g. physical) TV licences issued. Please provide this as an annual breakdown.*
- 5. The number of TV Licensing letters sent to holders of paper TV licences. Please provide this as an annual breakdown.*

As it may assist your processing of my request, I volunteer that I am seeking to establish if TV Licensing does actually "use less paper and have more money for programmes" like it claimed it did when the paperless TV licence was first launched. ”

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.

As you are aware, the Act gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. We are not required to create new information to respond to a request, or give a judgement or opinion that is not already recorded.

I shall address the parts of your request below.

Parts 1 and 4

TV Licensing reports on the number of TV licences 'in force' (LIF) and the exact number of licences in force varies on a daily basis as people will be buying new licences and some will terminate payment schemes before full payment has been made. Please see below LIF figures for paper and paperless TV Licences in respect of the financial years within the scope of your request:

Financial year	Paperless LIF	Paper LIF
2015/16 As at 31 March 2016	6,584,685	18,973,504
2016/17 As at 31 March 2017	7,578,130	18,247,988
2017/18 As at 31 March 2018	8,688,800	17,147,695
2018/19 As at 31 March 2019	9,884,199	15,868,361

Parts 2 and 5

The method of contact with customers is independent of their licence status: customers may have a paperless licence but choose to receive communications by post and vice versa. Consequently, we do not hold recorded information that enables us to answer these parts of your request. Responding to these would necessitate a bespoke and highly complex exercise which would constitute creating a new dataset as opposed to extracting information from existing data. This would amount to creating new information not already held and therefore falls outside the scope of the Act.

Part 3

I can confirm under section 1(1) of the Act that no recorded information is held. There is no dedicated letter sent specifically to paperless TV licence holders to confirm they have set up a new TV Licence or switched to paperless format.

Appeal Rights

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

