



Information Rights

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Andrew Howard

[request-813780-959e8d87@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-813780-959e8d87@whatdotheyknow.com)

6 January 2022

Dear Andrew Howard,

### **Freedom of Information request – RFI2021-1800**

Thank you for your request to the BBC of 5<sup>th</sup> December 2021 seeking the following information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000:

- 1. I would like to know how many of your employees have links or shares with pharmaceutical companies. Specifically Fergus Walsh, the naked scientist and his Scottish counterpart.*
- 2. I would also like to know what payments are made by the British government to the BBC and if they work independently of each other at all times.*

#### Response – question 1

In order to provide you with the requested information the BBC would need to carry out an audit of each individual's Declaration of Personal Interest. As there are c.18,000 Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) employees we estimate that to carry out this search would take more than two and a half days. 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).

We are mindful of our duty under section 16 of the Act to provide reasonable advice and assistance to you, and specifically to advise how you might narrow your request so that it complies with the time limit. We are however concerned that, because of the way the BBC holds the information you have requested, it is not possible to suggest any meaningful way of narrowing.

The BBC proactively publishes a summary of the external event register as part of the BBC's renewed commitment to impartiality, you can find it in the following link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/externaleventsregister>

Furthermore the BBC publishes the annual disclosures of senior staff in the following location:

<https://www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/whoweare/staff>

The BBC declaration of personal interest policy can be found in the following location:

[https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/foi/classes/policies\\_procedures/declaration-of-personal-interests-policy.pdf](https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/foi/classes/policies_procedures/declaration-of-personal-interests-policy.pdf)

### Response – question 2

Information regarding BBC income & funding from the Government is published in the BBCs Annual Report & Accounts, please refer to page 207 in the link provided below;

<https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/reports/annualreport/2020-21.pdf>

As set out in section 6(1)(b)(ii) of the Act, our subsidiaries (including BBC Studioworks Limited, UKTV, BBC Global News Ltd and BBC Studios Ltd), as well as the charities BBC Media Action and BBC Children in Need, are not subject to the Act. As such, information relating to these entities is not considered in the above response.

### **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,

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**BBC Legal**