



Information Rights

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

John Morrison

Via email: request-555772-4b8539fe@whatdotheyknow.com

20 March 2019

Dear Mr Morrison

Freedom of Information request – RFI20190340

Thank you for your request to the BBC of 25 February 2019 seeking the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'):

- 1. How much money was collected in TV Licensing fees from Scottish households in each of the years 2016, 2017 and 2018?*
- 2. How much money from collected TV Licensing fees was spent on "BBC Scotland" services in each of the years 2016, 2017 and 2018?*
- 3. Please provide a breakdown of how much money was spent by the BBC and on what services (i.e total spent on employee salaries, total spent on tv show production, total spent on expenses ect) in each of the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.*
- 4. How much money was collected in TV Licensing fees in total (UK wide) in each of the years 2016, 2017 and 2018?*
- 5. How much money did the BBC pay out in bonuses to its employees/executives/directors board members ect in each of the years 2016, 2017 and 2018?*

Response

I will now respond to each question in turn.

Question 1

For the purposes of administering the TV Licence system, there is no reason for licence fee income to be recorded by nation so the BBC does not hold this figure. Under my duty to advise and assist you, I can tell you that estimated income figures in each of the nations are available in the BBC Annual Report & Accounts – at

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/corporate2/insidethebbc/howwework/reports/ara> - for the financial years

relevant to the time period you have specified. As explained in the Annual Reports, these numbers are estimated as figures for each nation have been calculated by applying the proportion of licenced premises to the total number of licences in force.

Question 2 and 3

The information you have requested regarding how much is spent on BBC services and BBC Scotland services is excluded from the Act because it is held for the purposes of 'journalism, art or literature.' Part VI of Schedule 1 to FOIA provides that information held by the BBC and the other public service broadcasters is only covered by the Act if it is held for 'purposes *other* than those of journalism, art or literature'. The BBC is not required to supply information held for the purposes of creating the BBC's output or information that supports and is closely associated with these creative activities¹.

The limited application of the Act to public service broadcasters was to protect freedom of expression and the rights of the media under Article 10 European Convention on Human Rights ("ECHR"). The BBC, as a media organisation, is under a duty to impart information and ideas on all matters of public interest and the importance of this function has been recognised by the European Court of Human Rights. Maintaining our editorial independence is a crucial factor in enabling the media to fulfil this function.

However, on this occasion we're happy to voluntarily provide the below information in response to your request.

Our annual reports contain information regarding BBC Scotland expenditure. Please see the following link for the 2017/2018 annual report at page 155-158.

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/reports/pdf/bbc_annualreport_201718.pdf

The following link for the 2016/2017 annual report provides information regarding BBC Scotland at page 40-41 <https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/reports/pdf/bbc-annualreport-201617.pdf>

Please see the link below that contains all information regarding the expenses of the BBC's senior managers.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/corporate2/insidethebbc/managementstructure/biographies/>

The following link for the BBC annual report for 2017-2018 also provides information regarding the BBC's executive committee salaries at page 98 and the same link will provide information for staff costs at page 193 of the report.

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/reports/pdf/bbc_annualreport_201718.pdf

¹ For more information about how the Act applies to the BBC please see the enclosure which follows this letter.

Please note that this guidance is not intended to be a comprehensive legal interpretation of how the Act applies to the BBC.

The annual report also provides information regarding the amount that the BBC has spent on content

Please see the below link for the 2016/17 annual report at page 24-29

<https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/reports/pdf/bbc-annualreport-201617.pdf>

Please see the below link for the 2017/18 annual report at page 63-65.

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/reports/pdf/bbc_annualreport_201718.pdf

Question 4

Information about licence fee revenue in the UK (reported on a financial year basis) is published in the BBC's Annual Report & Accounts and in the TV Licensing Annual Reviews, available at

<https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/about/our-performance-AB6>.

Question 5

The BBC does not pay bonuses to BBC staff. You may find the following link helpful that provides information regarding salaries and expenses of the BBC's senior managers.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/corporate2/insidethebbc/managementstructure/biographies/>

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied that the BBC has complied with the Act in responding to question 1, 4 and 5 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 under the Act 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 SK9 5AF. Tel: 0303 123 1113 or see <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Please note in regards to our response to question 2 and 3 the BBC does not offer an internal review when the information requested is not covered by the Act. If you disagree with our decision you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. 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/>.

Please note that should the Information Commissioner's Office decide that the Act does cover this information, exemptions under the Act might then apply.

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights

BBC Legal

Freedom of Information

From January 2005 the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. The Act also sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities. The term “public authority” is defined in the Act; it includes all public bodies and government departments in the UK. The BBC, Channel 4, S4C and MG Alba are the only broadcasting organisations covered by the Act.

Application to the BBC

The BBC has a long tradition of making information available and accessible. It seeks to be open and accountable and already provides the public with a great deal of information about its activities. BBC Audience Services operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week handling telephone and written comments and queries, and the BBC’s website bbc.co.uk provides an extensive online information resource.

It is important to bear this in mind when considering the Freedom of Information Act and how it applies to the BBC. The Act does not apply to the BBC in the way it does to most public authorities in one significant respect. It recognises the different position of the BBC (as well as Channel 4 and S4C) by saying that it covers information “held for purposes other than those of journalism, art or literature”. This means the Act does not apply to information held for the purposes of creating the BBC’s output (TV, radio, online etc), or information that supports and is closely associated with these creative activities.

A great deal of information within this category is currently available from the BBC and will continue to be so. If this is the type of information you are looking for, you can check whether it is available on the BBC’s website bbc.co.uk or contact BBC Audience Services.

The Act does apply to all of the other information we hold about the management and running of the BBC.

The BBC's aim is to enrich people's lives with great programmes and services that inform, educate and entertain. It broadcasts radio and television programmes on analogue and digital services in the UK. It delivers interactive services across the web, television and mobile devices. The BBC's online service is one of Europe's most widely visited content sites. Around the world, international multimedia broadcaster BBC World Service delivers a wide range of language and regional services on radio, TV, online and via wireless handheld devices, together with BBC World News, the commercially-funded international news and information television channel.

The BBC's remit as a public service broadcaster is defined in the BBC Charter and Agreement. It is the responsibility of the Ofcom (the BBC’s independent regulator) to ensure that the organisation delivers against this remit by setting key objectives, approving strategy and policy, and monitoring and assessing performance. Ofcom also safeguard the BBC's independence and ensure the Corporation is accountable to its audiences and to Parliament.