



Information Rights

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Sent via email only to: [request-822603-9548f9f7@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-822603-9548f9f7@whatdotheyknow.com)

08 February 2022

Dear Mr Hartley,

**Freedom of Information request – RFI20220114**

Thank you for your request to the BBC of 15 January 2022 for the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'):

*"[...]*

- 1. How many cancellations of TV Licenses have been made from 2011 to 2021.*
- 2. Of these cancellations, how many households/customers have used Direct Debit (DD) Indemnity to reclaim previous incorrect payments.*
- 3. Please send a complete breakdown of the different DD Indemnity reasons used by households/customers to claim refunds.*
- 4. How many of the refunds via DD Indemnity were challenged by TV Licensing (or the appropriate authority).*
- 5. In how many cases has TV Licensing (or the appropriate authority) attempted to clawback the refunded payments via DD Indemnity.*
- 6. What enforcement methods does TV Licensing (or the appropriate authority) employ to clawback these payments.*
- 7. How many cases has TV Licensing (or the appropriate authority) been successful in reversing the DD Indemnity refunds."*

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 Limited ('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 Limited ('Target') is the supplier for the Simple Payment Plan. Marketing and printing services are contracted to RAPP Limited (formerly Proximity London Limited). 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.

Please be advised that the Act gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities; and that we are not required to create new information to respond to a request, or give a judgement or opinion that is not already recorded.

#### Part 1

In view of the overall context of your request, we have interpreted this part of your request as meaning the number of TV Licences cancelled by customers.

By way of background, licences can be cancelled for a variety of reasons by customers who no longer need a licence - for example, if they have moved into an address which already has one. TV Licensing management information is reported on a monthly basis (following the end of each month) and comprises data relates to licences in force in the UK, as a whole, where the licence has been cancelled by TV Licensing as a result of payment failure and by customers themselves. As this does not disaggregate the number of licences solely cancelled by customers, we do not hold recorded information that enables us to answer your specific request.

For your information, overall cancellations data for the UK is consolidated at the end of the financial year and published on the TV Licensing website at <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/about/foi-licences-facts-and-figures-AB18>.

#### Parts 2 to 7

We do not hold recorded information in the manner envisaged in these parts of your request because they are predicated on a misconstruction of TV Licensing's customer processes. In line with our duty to advise and assist you, please be advised that claims made under the Direct Debit Guarantee are entirely separate from TV Licensing cancellations and refunds.

#### Direct Debit Guarantee indemnity claims

In the rare event that an error is made in the payment of a Direct Debit, either by the organisation taking payment or the bank or building society, the Direct Debit Guarantee protects customers and they are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from their bank/building society. The erroneous payment will be reclaimed by the bank or building society, not TV Licensing. Direct Debit indemnity claims are not cancellations of a TV Licence and TV Licensing does not routinely record the reasons for such claims.

#### TV Licence cancellations

As explained above, a TV Licence may be cancelled by TV Licensing as a result of payment failure or by customers themselves. Depending on the circumstances, the customer may be entitled to a refund – see below. In the case of licences paid for by Direct Debit, any overpaid funds resulting from a licence cancellation are automatically returned to the customer's bank account.

## TV Licensing refunds

As outlined on the TV Licensing website , customers can request a refund for their TV Licence if they don't need licence before it expires, and have at least one complete month left on it or if the licence expired less than two years ago. The TV Licensing refunds process is governed by the TV Licensing Refund Policy and is not connected to indemnity claims made under the Direct Debit Guarantee.

### **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**