



Information Policy & Compliance
bbc.co.uk/foi

Mr Ganesh Sittampalam
request-11837-96be7f27@whatdotheyknow.com

9 June 2009

Dear Mr Sittampalam,

Request for Information – RFI20090686

Thank you for your email of 11 May 2009, requesting information under the auspices of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”).

The wording of your request was as follows:

“I request a copy of all contracts currently in force relating to the collection of television licence fees and enforcement of the television licensing system.”

While we are required to supply information contained in contracts (or parts of contracts) except where that information is exempted under the Act, it has become clear to us that compiling this information would be a lengthy activity likely to take well in excess of two and a half days. This conclusion has been reached only after a significant amount of work has already been undertaken by both ourselves and our contractors, and takes account of the wide-ranging nature of your request when ‘all contracts’ is interpreted literally.

Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act, we are not required to comply with a request if we estimate that the cost of doing so would exceed the “appropriate limit”. The appropriate limit has been set (by the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004) as being £450 – equivalent to two and a half days work, at an hourly rate of £25. On that basis, we are declining to handle your request as currently framed. However, if you would care to narrow the scope of your request, so that it becomes possible to comply with it within the specified timeframe, we would be happy to revisit this response.

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 the scope of your request as currently framed is so very broad and because we have no way of knowing (unless you wish to tell us) what your reason is for requesting the information, to provide such suggestions here might be counter-productive (i.e. it could be considered that we are leading you toward a particular course of action or conclusion). Therefore on this occasion we are not offering you advice in this regard, but will be happy to consider your narrowed response.

We would, however, advise you that some of the individual contracts held by us (or held by others on our behalf) may in themselves take time to collate (due, for example, to the number of contract variations held in separate documents), and accordingly we would strongly advise you to limit the scope of your revised request to just those documents (or sections of documents) that you are particularly interested in having sight of.

To confirm, 'TV Licensing' is a trade mark of the BBC and is used under licence by companies contracted by the BBC to administer the collection of television licence fees and enforcement of the television licensing system. The majority of administration is contracted to Capita Business Services Ltd., with cash related payment schemes contracted to Revenues Management Services Ltd. Over-the-counter services are provided by PayPoint plc. Marketing and public relations activities are contracted to the AMV Consortium. This consortium is made up of the following four companies: Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO Ltd., Fishburn Hedges Boys Williams Ltd., PHD Media Ltd. and Proximity London Ltd.

For the avoidance of any doubt, I would add that any documents supplied will most likely be subject to redaction, in accordance with the exemptions specified in the Act. In particular Section 43 (commercial prejudice) is likely to apply to some sections of the contract.

Your appeal rights

This enquiry has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act (as indicated above). 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 the reference number given at the start of this letter. If you are not satisfied with the internal review, you may appeal to the Information Commissioner, whose contact details are as follows: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF; telephone: 01625 545700; www.ico.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Gardner
Senior Policy Adviser, TV Licensing Management Team