

Responses to FOI requests to central government regarding costs of public relations and other activities

Original request – sent 28 July 2015

Please provide the following information in relation to your government department –

1. Total staffing cost of marketing, external communications and press offices for year 2014/15.
2. Total spending by marketing, external communications and press offices for the year 2014/15.

[there were three additional questions on other subjects]

Home Office (received 16/9/2015)

“...Where you have asked for marketing, external communications and press offices, we have taken your request to mean the units that currently deal with that area of work...”

1. Total staffing cost of marketing, external communications and press offices for year 2014/15.

Marketing: The total staffing cost of marketing was £222,638.63

External communications: This is not a category used by the Home Office to classify or record its expenditure, therefore the Home Office does not hold this information.

Press Office: We have taken the expression ‘Press Office’ to mean the Home Office Unit called Press Office, and we have taken staff costs to refer to the two account codes – “Pay Costs recurring and staff recharges”. Together the total sum is £3,017,359.55

2. Total spending by marketing, external communications and press offices for the year 2014/15.

Marketing: The total figure for spending on marketing was £3,609,144.00.

This includes media, evaluation, production costs and related fees but excludes VAT.

External communications: As with question 1, the Home Office does not hold this information.

Press Office; The total spend was £3,358,932.47 and includes staff costs in question 1.

Department for Communities & Local Government (received 18/8/2015)

1. The staffing costs requested are a total of £1,034,791. Please note that this figure excludes additional employer costs (employer’s National Insurance and pension contributions).

2. The total spend on external communications including marketing and press-related activities for 2014-15 is £296,000 on administration costs and £1,750,000 on programme costs.

[Note: clarification was received that the figure in answer to Q2 excluded the staff costs provided in the answer to Q1.]

Department for Education (received 21/8/2015)

1. The total staffing cost for the year 2014/15 was £2,395,361.
2. The total spend for the year 2014/15 was £990,965. This figure includes all programme activities conducted and general admin expenses.

Department of Health (received 25/8/2015)

1. Total staffing cost of marketing, external communications and press offices for the year 2014/15.

Please find set out below communications spend during 2014/15. The data provided includes spend for the following areas (aligned to the general categories in your question): - Press and PR
- Stakeholder relations - Campaigns - Digital Comms (not IT/digital service teams) The combined figure given below includes employee costs and other costs associated with staff training, travel, subsistence, non-staffing and other operational costs.

Communications spend in 2014/15 (admin spend)

5,648,759.00

Of the £5.6m figure given above, **£1,957,704** is for press office staffing and non-staffing costs (i.e. day-to-day running costs of the press office).

2. Total spending by marketing, external communications and press offices for the year 2014/15.

The total spend in the areas set out above for the year 2014/15 was **£855,992.00** and includes programme spend directly associated with marketing campaigns, advertising and research & evaluation.

[It will be noted that the answer to Q1 above is rather confusing – I queried this immediately on receipt and received clarification on 21/9/2015 – it appeared to be treated as an entirely new FOI request. Here is the clarification:]

Q1

We reviewed your initial request where you asked for the ‘total staffing costs of marketing, external communications and press offices for the year 2014/15’. The bulk of our marketing function moved to Public Health England on 1 April 2013. Also, we were not clear about what you define as ‘external communications’. We therefore tried to set out communications spend (aligned to the general categories in your question) in the following areas:

- Press and PR
- Stakeholder relations

- Campaigns
- Digital Comms (not IT/digital service teams)

We note you have requested us to further separate staffing costs from non-staffing costs. The information can be found in the table below:

Communications spend in 2014/15
(admin spend)

Staffing costs: 5,237,259.00

Non-staffing costs: 411,500.00

TOTAL SPEND: 5,648,759.00

Q2

In addition to the £5.6m figure provided, the total spend in the areas we have set out above for the year 2014/15 is £855,992.00. As explained previously, this is classified as programme spend and is directly associated with marketing campaigns and research & evaluation.

Department for Work & Pensions (received 25/8/2015)

I can confirm that we hold some information falling within the description specified in your request. However, we estimate that the cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate limit of £600. The appropriate limit has been specified in regulations and for central Government it is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3 1/2 working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act the Department is not obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing your request further.

Under section 16 of the FOIA we are obliged to assist you in providing options to narrow your request, by reforming or refocusing it, so that it will fall beneath the cost limit. Total spending on communications comes from various Departmental budgets, so you could narrow your request by asking about communications staff and activity spend specifically in relation to the Strategic Communications Directorate budget. However, we should advise that we cannot guarantee that any revised request will be within the cost limit.

Northern Ireland Office (received 25/8/2015)

1. The total staffing cost of marketing, external communications and press offices for the year 2014/15 was £192,247.
2. The total spending for marketing, external communications and press offices for the year 2014/15 was £254,835. (Please note, this figure includes staffing cost and overheads for the department's external and internal communication functions).

Scotland Office (received 25/8/2015)

Due to the size of the department, the Scotland Office does not separately record the staffing cost or spending on marketing, external communications and press offices.

Treasury (received 25/8/2015)

In response to the first and second parts of your request, marketing, external communications and press office functions are carried out by a range of Treasury teams. The total costs are therefore not attributable to a specific budget.

[Not surprisingly, I have requested an internal review of this response.]

Department for International Development (received 26/8/2015)

1. The total pay cost of external communications and press offices for 2014/15 is £2,238,950. DFID does not have a marketing office.
2. The total spending (non-pay cost) of external communications and press offices for 2014/15 is £294,531. Please see question 1 above regarding marketing.

Department for Transport (received 26/8/2015)

Organisation	Staffing cost of marketing, external communications and press offices ^{(1) (2)} £000s	Spending by marketing, external communications and press offices ⁽²⁾ £000s
Department for Transport (Central)	3535	6474 ⁽⁴⁾
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	453	13
Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency	505	271
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	231	294
Vehicle Certification Agency	Nil ⁽³⁾	63

(1) Includes employer National Insurance and superannuation costs and temporary contract staff costs where identifiable.

(2) Web publishing is included where identifiable as part of organisations communications function/cost.

(3) VCA has no staff members spending more than 50% of their time on the functions mentioned.

(4) THINK! Road Safety campaigns are the largest component, £4.7 million excluding VAT.

The cost of placing public notices in the London Gazette, local, regional and national newspapers to meet statutory requirements (mainly under roads Acts) is not included above, but amounted to £665,000, excluding VAT, in 2014/15.

[Note: the figures for the agencies were not included in my calculations for total government spend]

Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (received 4/9/2015)

1. The staffing cost of Defra's Communications function, which incorporates the Press Office, was £3.1m in 2014/15.
2. Total spending by Defra's Communications function was £3.4m, comprising the aforementioned £3.1m staffing cost and £0.3m non-staffing costs.

Ministry of Defence (received 26/8/2015)

1. The total staffing outturn for all communications (including marketing, press offices, internal and external communications) for the Ministry of Defence excluding trading funds for the financial year (FY) 2014-15 was £30.1 million.
2. The total outturn all communications (including marketing, press offices, internal and external communications) for the Ministry of Defence excluding trading funds for the financial year (FY) 2014-15 was £82.8 million. This figure includes salaries, and advertising and marketing for the Armed Forces.

Department for Culture, Media & Sport (received 8/9/2015)

1. The staffing of marketing, external communications and press office for the Financial Year 14/15 cost was: £1.261 Million

These staffing costs also include contingent labour costs, the staff costs are not attributed to any one area for there to be a specific analysis of which costs are related to marketing, press etc, the system only provides an overall costs due to the nature of the expenditure account structure. More granular analysis of staffing costs by function identified in the request is not possible.

2. Total spending by marketing, external communications and press offices for the Financial year 2014/15: £9.671 Million

Of this, £9.315 Million relates to two campaigns run by Broadband Delivery UK; Broadband Connection Vouchers (£1.652m) and Go Superfast (£7.663m). More granular analysis of the remaining costs by function identified in the request is not possible.

Cabinet Office (received 16/9/2015)

1. The number of posts and salaries of reporting posts in the government communications unit at the Cabinet Office is available online in the Cabinet Office organogram, which can be found at <http://reference.data.gov.uk/gov-structure/organogram/?dept=co&post=1>.

2. The total spend by marketing, external communications and press offices for the year 2014/15 was £4,302,604

[Note: the answer to question 1 does not, of course, answer the question – it seems unlikely that this information would fully answer the question asked.]

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (received 16/9/2015)

1. Total staffing cost of marketing, external communications and press offices for the year 2014/15.

£3,541, 200

2. Total spending by marketing, external communications and press offices for the year 2014/15.

£20,929,400

Wales Office (received 11/8/2015)

1. The total staffing costs of the Wales Office press and communications team in 2014-15 was £336,275.

2. The total spend excluding staff costs by the press and communications team was £25,982.

Attorney General's Office (received 20/8/2015)

1. £161,141

2. We do not hold this information. Spending at the AGO is not broken down by team, so it is not possible to provide figures for this.

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Despite a phone call from the information rights team and two emails apologising for the delay, no answer has yet been received.

Ministry of Justice

No response.

Department of Energy and Climate Change

No response.