

Our ref: FOI 740,162

Your ref:

OT Directorate Services Team Manager
9th Floor
The Cube
199 Wharfside Street
Birmingham B1 1RN

26 August 2016

Thank you for your request for information about unauthorised signs, dated 11 July 2016. I have dealt with your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

In your email of 11 July you asked the following questions:

1. *Between 1st March 2016 and 30th June 2016:*
 - a) *how many reports of unauthorised signs on highways maintained or managed by Highways England were received concerning signs suggesting or depicting that Britain should leave the EU and*
 - b) *How many such signs were removed.*
2. *What was the cost in time and money incurred by Highways England or its agents in arranging for such removals.*
3. *How many reports of:*
 - a) *unauthorised signs on highways maintained or managed by Highways England were received concerning signs suggesting or depicting that Britain should remain in the EU and*
 - b) *How many such signs were removed.*
4. *What was the cost in time and money incurred by Highways England or its agents in arranging for such removals.*

Unauthorised signs on or within the boundaries of England's motorways and major A roads need to be removed because they could distract drivers and therefore pose a safety risk.

Our service providers routinely patrol our network and are instructed to remove all such signs. This means in some instances unauthorised signs will have been removed before they have been reported to us.

Between 01 March 2016 and 30 June 2016 there were 202 reports of unauthorised signs suggesting or depicting that Britain should leave the EU; 235 signs were removed.

There were 19 reports of unauthorised signs suggesting or depicting that Britain should remain in the EU and 26 signs were removed.

There were a further 9 unauthorised signs relating to the referendum that were removed. Our records do not state whether they were for 'leave' or 'remain'.

In total, there were over 2400 unauthorised signs removed from Highways England's 4,300 miles of motorways and major "A" roads last year.

Our maintenance contracts are structured so that our service providers are paid a "lump sum" for a wide range of general maintenance duties. This includes the removal of unauthorised signs and as we do not disaggregate this spend, we cannot provide the cost of removing these signs.

Unauthorised signs placed outside of our boundaries are the responsibility of the relevant local authority.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request you may ask for an internal review. Our internal review process is available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england/about/complaints-procedure>

If you require a print copy, please phone the Information Line on 0300 123 5000; or e-mail info@highwaysengland.co.uk. You should contact me if you wish to complain.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me. Please remember to quote reference number CRS 740,162 in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Email: Ops_dst@highwaysengland.co.uk