



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

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[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

**Our ref:** RFI 6657

**Date:** 13 June 2014

██████

Dear ██████

## **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTUBE**

Thank you for your request for information, dated 16 May 2014. We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Following careful consideration, we have decided not to disclose some of this information.

### **1. Please list any social media accounts and YouTube or other video/audio channels maintained or contributed to by the department.**

Information you have requested is exempt under section 21(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 21 exempts information if this information is reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. Section 21 is an absolute exemption and Defra is not required to consider whether the public interest favours disclosure of this information.

For your information, all social media channels (and YouTube) are publicly available via the appropriate social media websites. Links to the main social media accounts can be found via our departmental homepage on GOV.UK i.e.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs>

### **2. How many members of staff are briefed with maintaining the department's presence on social media and YouTube or other video/audio channels? How many of these are full-time/fully devoted to these tasks?**

No information is held on this request.

For your information, responsibility for maintaining social media channels lies across the Defra communications directorate and across numerous policy teams. The use of social media is increasingly becoming an integral part for all government communicators and civil



servants. More detail can be found on the Government Communication Service website:  
<https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/>

**3. What is the department's budget/projected spend for the next twelve months (up to the 2015 general election) for social media and video/audio channels?**

None

**- 3a. What areas will this spend focus on?**

N/A

**Since May 2010 (per year, if possible)**

**4. How much money has the department spent on maintaining a presence on social media and YouTube?**

Since May 2010 no money has been spent on maintaining a presence on social media and YouTube, beyond internal staffing resource.

For your information, you may be interested to know that no funds have been spent in relation to promoting content or to increase the number of followers to any Defra social media account.

**5. How much of this money was spent on staffing costs associated with social media and YouTube?**

No information is held on this request.

For your information, responsibility for staffing on social media and YouTube is around the entire Defra communications directorate and across numerous policy teams. This makes it impossible to break it down by staffing costs associated with social media and YouTube. The use of social media is increasingly becoming an integral part for all government communications. More detail can be found on the Government Communication Service website: <https://gcn.civilservice.gov.uk/>

**6. How much of this money was spent on social media training?**

In 2012 approximately twenty Defra staff attended social media training which was commissioned from Helpful Technology. Information about payments made to the training supplier is being withheld because it is exempt under section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 43(2) protects information which would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

Section 43 is a qualified exemption and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours our release of this material. There is a definite public interest in disclosure of information and I recognise that openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government. The information requested might

deepen public understanding and so lead to more informed public consideration of the way in which Defra spends money. On the other hand, disclosure of the costs of a relatively small programme might suggest the “going rate” for such events which might hinder the department in obtaining value for money in future negotiations. This would not be in the public interest. Taking into account all the circumstances of the case, I have determined that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information.

**- 6a. Who received this training?**

Approximately twenty members of the Defra communications directorate.

**- 6b. What form did the training take?**

Classroom based training.

**- 6c - Who provided this training?**

Helpful Technology.

**7. How much of this money was spent on technology and software/hardware?**

No money was spent on technology and software/hardware beyond materials required for training, which were part of the overall cost.

**8. How of this money has the department spent on its YouTube or other video/audio channels?**

Since May 2010 the department has not spent any money on its YouTube or other video/audio channels.

**- 8a. How does this divide between production and staff costs?**

Information is not held on this request

**9. How many complaints or “reports” per year have been lodged against a department post on a social media or video/audio site?**

No information is held relating to complaints on social media or audio/video sites.

**10. What software or strategy does the department have in place to monitor what is being said about the department and its work on social media and what are the costs associated with this?**

Defra doesn't have any software installed to monitor social media. Defra does however contract a publicly available service that is managed on an internet based platform hosted by Gorkana Group. The cost of this service is being withheld because it is exempt under section 43 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 43(2) protects information which would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

Section 43 is a qualified exemption and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours our release of this material. There is a definite public interest in disclosure of information and I recognise that openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government. The information requested might deepen public understanding and so lead to more informed public consideration of the way in which Defra spends money. On the other hand, disclosure of the costs might hinder the department in obtaining value for money in future negotiations. This would not be in the public interest. Taking into account all the circumstances of the case, I have determined that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA, and in keeping with the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours

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## Annex A

### Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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Copyright in other documents may rest with a third party. For information about obtaining permission from a third party see the [Intellectual Property Office's website](#).

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## Annex B

### Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: [requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk)) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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