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[Redacted]
By email: [Redacted]

Our ref: FOI2026/17425
25 August 2026

Dear [Redacted]

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: Communications Directorate's media relations/press office staffing and gross salary costs, FY2025-26

Thank you for your request for information of 9 August 2026 about the Communications Directorate's media relations/press office staffing and gross salary costs, for the year 2025-26. We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Your information request and our response are set out below.

1) *The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) central Communications Directorate staff in primarily Press Office / Media Relations roles as at 31 March 2026, or the nearest date to this for which the figure is held.*

At March 2026, the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) number of staff in the National Press team was 30.6.

2) *The related staffing costs – that is, salaries, employer pension contributions and employer National Insurance contributions, but excluding any operational (non-staff) costs – incurred over the financial year 2025–26 for those central Communications Directorate staff in primarily Press Office / Media Relations roles.*

The staffing costs for the team for the full year 2025-2026 was £2,492,593. This includes all payments made to staff, in addition to employer pension contributions and employer National Insurance contributions.

Section 16 of the FOIA requires public authorities to offer advice and assistance when reasonable.

Defra Group Communications is the first single employer shared service communications team in Whitehall, working for six organisations. We have merged six geographically dispersed communications teams from the core department and Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) and now have a single team operating as an integrated

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communications function that reduces duplication, improves performance and saves money.

Alongside the core department, the team provides communications support for five of the department's largest ALBs including the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the Forestry Commission and the Rural Payments Agency. The teams work across all communications disciplines in support of the policy and operational priorities within each of these organisations. This includes media, planning, stakeholder engagement, digital communications and internal communications across the six parts of the Defra group.

Information disclosed in response to this FOIA request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on GOV.UK, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

We attach Annex A, explaining the copyright that applies to the information being released to you, and 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 us.

Yours sincerely

Information Rights Team
InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk

Annex A

Copyright

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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 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to [Redacted] Head of Information Rights via email at InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk and they 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's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure.

The ICO can be contacted using the following link:

https://ico.org.uk/