



Information Policy & Compliance
bbc.co.uk/foi

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

27 August 2009

Dear Mr [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Request - RF120091146

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the Act") received on 30 July 2009, seeking the information relating to Common Purpose training at the BBC. Please find below responses to each part of your request:

Would you please provide, on a year by year basis for the past eight years, the expenditure of the BBC on Common Purpose 'training' courses.

Over the last 7 financial years the BBC has spent a total of £158,100 with Common Purpose. Please find below this figure broken down by each financial year. Information prior to 2002 is not available, therefore we are unable to provide you with figures for 2001/2002.

Financial Year	Total (£)
2002-2003	27,400
2003-2004	18,145
2004-2005	10,470
2005-2006	21,630
2006-2007	24,676
2007-2008	15,726
2008-2009	40,053
Total	158,100



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Would you please provide the evidence to demonstrate the benefits accrued by the BBC Licence Payer resulting from the money paid to Common Purpose for 'training'.

Would you please provide the evidence showing how the expenditure on 'training' for Common Purpose is compatible with the governing principles of the BBC.

As background, Common Purpose training was provided as a structured exercise to assist senior editorial staff in building partnerships and developing knowledge, experience and contacts in their local area. This is consistent with the BBC's public purposes (as set out in the Charter and Agreement), in particular "Sustaining citizenship and civil society" and "Stimulating creativity and cultural excellence", both of which require editorial staff to have a thorough understanding of the social and cultural characteristics of their local area. Staff who attended the course reported that it had been both a really useful learning/training experience and had also opened up a huge network of contacts.

Would you please provide details of any influence, interest or control that Common Purpose may be able to place upon the BBC by virtue of having BBC 'graduates' - those within the BBC that been in receipt of Common Purpose 'training'.

Under section 1(1) of the Act, I can confirm that the BBC does not hold any recorded information of the type you have requested.

Are there any Common Purpose officers or officials within the BBC, in addition to those who have been in receipt of Common Purpose 'training'.

For the purposes of this request, we have interpreted 'officers' or 'officials' to mean members of staff who are members of the Common Purpose organisation. All staff are required to declare any conflict of interest upon entering employment with the BBC, or upon moving jobs within the organisation. Staff are not required to declare membership of any organisation unless membership would directly conflict with the job they are carrying out within the BBC. All forms on which a potential conflict is indicated are rigorously reviewed by the appropriate line manager and appropriate steps put in place to ensure that any potential conflict is resolved.

The BBC does not monitor information relating to membership of organisations, including Common Purpose. This information, if it is held, would only be available from individuals' conflict of interest forms held by HR; in order to respond in full to your request the BBC would need to carry out an audit of all personnel files. As there are over 20,000 staff currently at the BBC, we anticipate that it would take BBC staff more than two and a half days to carry out this search. Under section 12 of the Act, we are allowed to refuse to handle the request if it would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit has been set by the Regulations (SI 2004/3244) as being £450 (equivalent to two and a half days work, at an hourly rate of £25).

The BBC's Editorial Guidelines state that the BBC's impartiality must not be brought into question by the outside interests of its staff. Specifically:

"Conflicts of interest can arise for anyone who appears on air or has responsibility for the content of a programme or service. There must never be any suggestion that personal, commercial, business, financial or other interests have influenced the BBC's editorial or financial decisions. Presenters, reporters, producers, editors, researchers and managers are all affected. The higher someone's level of editorial responsibility, the greater the need to avoid any possible conflicts of interest. There may be particular sensitivities concerning the activities of on air talent.....Production and editorial staff are required to declare any personal interest or relationships which may affect their work. They should discuss any possible conflicts of interest with their line manager. Freelance presenters, reporters, producers and researchers are normally contractually required to declare any personal interests or relationships which may affect their work with the BBC."

Further information relating to conflicts of interest can be found at the following:

1. BBC Policy 'Conflict of Interest':

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/foi/classes/policies_procedures/conflicts_interest_guidelines.pdf

2. Section 13 of the Editorial Guidelines 'Editorial Integrity & Independence':

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/edguide/editorial/conflictsofinte.shtml>

Would you please provide copies of any BBC policy documents that reference Common Purpose.

We do not believe there to be any policy documents which refer to Common Purpose, but in order to confirm this we would need to check all documents in the BBC. We estimate that to carry out this search would take more than two and a half days. Under section 12 of the Act, we are allowed to refuse to handle the request if it would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit has been set by the Regulations (SI 2004/3244) as being £450 (equivalent to two and a half days work, at an hourly rate of £25). On this basis we cannot provide you with an accurate number of BBC staff who have attended Common Purpose training events.

I hope this response satisfies your request.

Your Appeal Rights:

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to an internal review by a BBC senior manager. Please contact us at the following address: BBC Freedom of Information, Room 2252, White City, 201 Wood Lane, London W12 7TS, explaining what you would like us to review and including your reference number: If you are not satisfied with the internal review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. The contact details are: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF, telephone 01625 545 700 or see <http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

Yours sincerely

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