

Reference: 01435933

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Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning the funding of GB news. Your request was received on 14 March 2022 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FOI Act').

Your request

You asked:

Who funds GB news? As Russian interference highlighted maybe you should be investigating who funds GB news. Why did you give them a license? They not making money so where's the funding coming from?

Background

By way of background, the licences for the GB News service (licences [TLCS103139](#) and [DTPS103140](#)) were granted to All Perspectives Ltd on 13 January 2020.

You can find information about the standard process that Ofcom follows when assessing applications for Television Licensable Content Services ("TLCS") or Digital Television Programme Services ("DTPS") on our [website](#). Ofcom may only grant a TLCS or DTPS licence where Ofcom is satisfied that an applicant may hold a licence in accordance with the statutory requirements. Among other things, the applicant must not be a 'disqualified person' (within the meaning of section 5(1)(a) of the Broadcasting Acts 1990 and 1996) and we may not grant a licence unless we are satisfied that the applicant is a 'fit and proper' person to hold it (in accordance with section 3(3)(a) of the Broadcasting Acts 1990 and 1996).

In order to allow us to take a decision to grant a licence, we ask applicants to provide information in our standard TLCS and DTPS application forms (available via the link above) regarding the persons who exercise control over the applicant (including directors and shareholders). When considering whether an applicant is fit and proper to hold a licence, Ofcom will look at¹, for example, whether individuals who are likely to exercise control over the applicant and its activities have any criminal

¹ For more information, see our Guidance Notes for [TLCS](#) and [DTPS](#) licence applicants.

convictions or have ever been declared bankrupt, as well as other matters such as disqualification of directors, removal from a professional or trade body and previous broadcasting compliance history.

Our response

Regarding the licensing of GB News, Ofcom followed these standard procedures in considering whether the general conditions required for an applicant to be deemed 'fit and proper' were in place as part of their assessment. As noted above, Ofcom may not grant a licence unless we are satisfied that the applicant is a 'fit and proper' person to hold a licence. We can confirm that Ofcom was satisfied the applicant was a 'fit and proper' person when it decided to grant the licence for the GB News service. Specific information and documents relating to our assessment for the granting of the licence, including the information that was provided in the application form, are exempt from disclosure under section 44 of the FOI Act, which exempts the disclosure of information which is prohibited by another enactment. In this case, we are prohibited under section 393 of the Communications Act 2003 (the 'Communications Act') from disclosing information relating to a business which we have obtained in the course of exercising our functions, unless we have the consent of that business or one of the statutory gateways under section 393(2) of the Communications Act is met, none of which applies here. The business in this case is the entity to which the licence of GB News was granted, namely All Perspectives Limited. Section 44 is an absolute exemption and therefore is not subject to a public interest test.

In relation to the funding of GB News, I can confirm that we do hold this information, however, we are unable to disclose the information that we hold in scope of your request. This is because it falls within section 44 of the FOI Act which exempts disclosure of information which is prohibited from disclosure under another enactment, namely section 393 of the Communications Act, which prohibits disclosure of information about a business which we have obtained in the course of exercising our functions, as outlined above. In this case, the business is GB News. However, you may find the information on GB News' website about [its investors](#) to be useful.

If you have any further queries, then please send them to information.requests@ofcom.org.uk quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Zach Westbrook

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

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. Further information about this, and the internal review process can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office [here](#). Alternatively, the Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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