

Reference: 01478090

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### Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning the budget for Ofcom's online safety event on 2nd August 2022. Your request was received on 14 July 2022 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'). We needed some more time to consider the public interest in releasing or withholding the information and we wrote to you on 11 August 2022. We have now concluded our consideration.

I thought it might also be helpful to provide some background about the event, which was designed to promote discussion around Ofcom's report on abuse towards footballers on social media, as well as to share and promote awareness of the findings.

The study, carried out by the Alan Turing Institute, tested the ability of machine-learning technology to analyse more than 2.3 million tweets directed at Premier League footballers over the first five months of the 2021/2022 season. The audience for the August event included policy professionals and academics, as well as people working in football with an interest in tackling this particular problem of abuse in the national game.

A copy of the report is now available which you may find useful: [Tracking abuse on Twitter against football players in the 2021-22 Premier League season](#)

### Your request & our response

*Please disclose the estimated cost and/or budget of Ofcom's online safety event at the National Football Museum in Manchester on August 2, 2022, including the cost of:*

*- hiring the venue*

We are unable to disclose the amount paid in respect of venue hire as we consider this information is exempt under section 43(2) of the Act. Section 43(2) deals with the exemption of information that would prejudice the commercial interests of a person or company. In this case, we consider that disclosure of the amount paid by Ofcom to the venue would, or would be likely to, prejudice its commercial interests.

Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption, which means that we have had to consider whether or not the public interest in disclosing the information you have requested outweighs the public interest in withholding the information. In this case, we consider that the public interest favours withholding

the information. The Annex attached to this letter sets out the above exemption in full, as well as the factors Ofcom considered for and against disclosure of the information you requested.

*- The appearance of Gary Lineker*

We paid no fee to Gary Lineker for his appearance, and instead made a charitable donation of £2,000 at his request.

*- Travel costs for staff*

The total for 5 Ofcom staff members came to £492.39

*- Commissioning the Alan Turing Institute*

We are unable to disclose the amount paid to the Alan Turing Institute as we consider this information is exempt under section 43(2) of the Act for the reasons given above in relation to point 1 of your request, namely that disclosure of the amount paid by Ofcom in relation to the commissioning of the Alan Turing Institute would, or would be likely to prejudice its commercial interests.

The Annex included in this letter sets out the above exemption in full, as well as the factors Ofcom considered for and against disclosure of the information you requested.

The estimated cost of this event was approximately £30,281.95.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any further queries, then please send them to [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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

**Annex A**

<p><b>Section 43(2) of the Act:</b></p> <p><i>“Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it)”</i></p>	
<p><b>Factors for disclosure</b></p>	<p><b>Factors for withholding</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling the public to gain a better understanding of the commercial relationships between suppliers (event venues and research organisations) and the nature of the services provided, and thereby increasing transparency and public confidence in Ofcom’s work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofcom continues to procure contracts like those related to this request. To release commercially sensitive information such as the cost of research or venue hire for an event would put us in a detrimental position for future negotiations or procurements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reasons why public interest favours withholding information</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofcom enjoys a positive relationship with those suppliers it contracts with. The release of information which would, or would be likely to, prejudice commercial interests would impair Ofcom’s commercial relationships with suppliers and Ofcom’s commercial activity if suppliers could not be confident that such information would be withheld from disclosure. Similarly, Ofcom’s ability to obtain value for money in services it contracts for and the ability to procure services in general may be undermined in future procurements if such details were disclosed.</li> <li>• The potential prejudice to commercial interests outweighs the public interest in disclosure of this information, given the limited contribution of this information in enabling the public to better understand how Ofcom performs its functions in this context.</li> </ul>	