

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Decision notice

Date: 22 January 2018

Public Authority: British Broadcasting Corporation
Address: Room BC2 A4
Broadcast Centre White City
Wood Lane
London
W12 7TP

Decision (including any steps ordered)

1. The complainant has requested information relating to how many allegations have been made against BBC employees or contributors which contain an element of sexual harassment and/or inappropriate sexual behaviour. The BBC has failed to respond to this request.
2. The Commissioner considers that the BBC breached section 10(1) FOIA in the handling of this request.
3. The Commissioner requires the public authority to take the following steps to ensure compliance with the legislation.
 - The BBC must provide the complainant with a response to this request in accordance with its obligations under FOIA.
4. The public authority must take these steps within 35 calendar days of the date of this decision notice. Failure to comply may result in the Commissioner making written certification of this fact to the High Court pursuant to section 54 of the Act and may be dealt with as a contempt of court.

Request and response

5. On 18 October 2017 the complainant made the following request for information:

"Request under Freedom of Information.

How many allegations have been made against BBC employees or contributors which contain an element of sexual harassment and/or inappropriate sexual behaviour during each of the following financial years.

2012/13
2013/14
2014/15
2015/16
2016/17

Please provide a breakdown for each of the above financial years stating the outcome of the cases including any action taken and state the number of complainants who were BBC staff/contributors and the number who were members of the public.

I would like this information on email"

6. The BBC has failed to respond to this request.

Scope of the case

7. The complainant contacted the Commissioner on 5 December 2017 to complain about the way her request for information had been handled.
8. The Commissioner has considered whether the BBC has dealt with this request in accordance with its obligations under section 10(1) FOIA.

Reasons for decision

9. Section 10(1) provides that:

"Subject to subsections (2) and (3), a public authority must comply with section 1(1) promptly and in any event not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt."

10. Section 1(1) provides that:

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled –

*(a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and
(b) if that is the case, to have that information communicated to him.”*

11. The request was made on 18 October 2017 and a response has not yet been provided. The Commissioner therefore finds that the BBC breached section 10(1) in failing to respond within 20 working days.

Right of appeal

12. Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from: First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)

GRC & GRP Tribunals,
PO Box 9300,
LEICESTER,
LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0300 1234504

Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: GRC@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber

13. If you wish to appeal against a decision notice, you can obtain information on how to appeal along with the relevant forms from the Information Tribunal website.
14. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

Signed

Gemma Garvey
Senior Case Officer

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