

Reference: 02209334

Information Requests
information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

7 July 2026

Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information about the external legal spend on GB News v Ofcom [2025] EWHC 460.

We received this request on 9 June 2026 and we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the FOI Act").

Your request & our response

Freedom of Information request to Ofcom asking for

(a) its own external legal spend on GB News v Ofcom [2025] EWHC 460

Whilst we hold this information, it is being withheld as we consider that its disclosure is exempt under section 43(2) of the FOI Act. This exemption deals with information that, if disclosed, would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of a person or company. In applying this exemption, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosing the information. The annex attached to this letter sets out the exemption in full, as well as the factors Ofcom considered when deciding where the public interest lay.

(b) the amount paid or agreed in respect of GB News's cost

In line with normal practice, when a party wins a civil court case in England and Wales, they will usually ask the court for an order that the other party pays its legal costs.

The costs in this instance amounted to a total of £550,000, which is reasonably typical for a case of this length and nature. By way of context, Ofcom is funded by the industries we regulate, not by taxes.

Yours sincerely,

Information Requests

Request an internal review

If you are unhappy with the response you have received to your request for information, or think that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you do, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom. We will either uphold the original decision, or reverse or modify it.

If you would like to ask us to carry out an internal review, you should get in touch within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for us to complete our internal review, and the time it takes will depend on the complexity of the request. But we will try to complete the review within 20 working days (or no more than 40 working days in exceptional cases) and keep you informed of our progress. Please email the Information Requests team (information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) to request an internal review.

Taking it further

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our internal review, then you have the right to [complain to the Information Commissioner's Office](#).

Section 43(2) of the FOI Act provides that:

“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)”.

Factors for disclosure	Factors for withholding
• Disclosure would enable the public to gain a better understanding of the commercial relationships between Ofcom and third parties and the nature of the services provided, and thereby increasing public confidence in Ofcom’s work. • Generally, there is a public interest in the transparency of expenditure, particularly if public money is involved.	• Ofcom continues to negotiate legal fees like those related to this request regarding legal service providers. To release the specific information requested would likely put Ofcom in a detrimental position for future fee negotiations by undermining its bargaining position with potential contractors. • In addition, the release of the detailed amount Ofcom paid would likely prejudice the commercial interests of our external legal suppliers – in that it would provide details of negotiated fees to its competitors or potential clients. • Ofcom contracts with a variety of companies in order to support its operations and has ongoing financial relationships with many of them. Companies need to be confident that information relating to their business, such as information relating to the charges for services, will not be disclosed if it would, or would be likely to, prejudice their commercial interests. Releasing companies’ commercially sensitive information might detrimentally affect their negotiating power in the future, and may deter them from partaking in our procurement exercises or providing us with services in future.
Reasons why public interest favours withholding information	
• We consider that, on balance, the potential prejudice to commercial interests outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the amount spent on legal fees regarding this case. • We consider that, on balance, the public interest in withholding disclosure of the requested information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. • Ofcom enjoys a positive relationship with those organisations it contracts with. The release of information which would, or would be likely to, prejudice commercial interests into the public domain would impair both Ofcom’s relationship with providers of services,	

and adversely affect its commercial relationships with them. Similarly, Ofcom's bargaining position, and therefore ability to obtain value for money in services it contracts for, may be undermined in future negotiations if details about the cost of these services were disclosed.

- Weighing the issues presented, it is considered that on balance, the factors for withholding the requested information outweigh those for disclosing the information.