

6 August 2024

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2024/00361

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request, received on the 26 April, and subsequent communications and clarifications, the most recent of which was received on 4 July, in which you requested the following:

Your request:

Please can communication spending be provided for:

1. *UKRI across time (from 2018 onwards if possible)*
2. *ESRC across time (from 2010 onwards if possible)*
3. *MRC* across time (from 2010 onwards if possible)*

Total and split by staff/non staff time if possible.

To facilitate an analysis of how these costs have changed across time, please total costs for such roles (no individual salaries are required) be provided separately by calendar year (from 2010 or shortly thereafter).

UKRI have previously given detail for UKRI spending for 2023 here
<https://ukri.disclosurelog.co.uk/case/85b06054-43e1-4e30-ad47-6bc257a9703e>.

** Communication spend data for MRC to be provided for MRC Head Office and if possible, for the UK Dementia Research Institute, the Francis Crick Institute and Health Data Research UK (HDRUK) separately.*

Our response:

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) hold some information relevant to your request. Please see the information below.

The figures provided below are for communication and engagement spend. UKRI and research council teams cover a spectrum of communications (e.g. press, media) and engagement (e.g. public engagement and involvement) activities and we are therefore unable to separate the two.

Communication and Engagement Spending for UKRI

UKRI was launched in April 2018, bringing together the seven disciplinary research councils, Research England and Innovate UK. The UKRI Communications & Engagement (C&E) function was formed in July 2019. Prior to this, councils had their own teams, with spend categorised in a variety of different ways, which makes it impossible for us to identify communication and engagement spending in the same way, therefore comparable data is not held for 2018/19.

Table 1: UKRI Communication & Engagement function spend by Financial Year

Financial Year	Staff Costs	Non-Staff Costs	Total
2018/19	Not Held	Not Held	Not Held
2019/20 ¹	£3,598,209	£3,524,426	£7,122,456

2020/21	£6,214,136	£2,685,350	£8,899,486
2021/22	£6,525,796	£2,535,334	£9,061,130
2022/23	£6,308,630	£2,092,625	£8,401,255
2023/24	£6,221,350	£2,189,241	£8,410,591

¹ As part of a centralisation process, relevant staff were transferred from their original council into the UKRI C&E function during 2019/20. This delayed spending plans as new processes and priorities were agreed and led to a reduced spending profile overall. Individual councils incurred staff costs while this process took place, which were then recharged to the central UKRI function under a non-staff account code. This has resulted in the staff costs figure appearing lower and the non-staff costs figure appearing higher for this year than was the case. Unfortunately, due to the way this data is stored, we are unable to separate these costs for a direct comparison to the following years.

Communication and Engagement Spending for ESRC

As noted in our response to FOI2022/00406, communications and engagement spending for individual research councils was not tracked as a category or in a uniform manner prior to 2022/23. For ESRC, communication and engagement spend was integrated into a range of budgets and is therefore not held from 2010/11 to 2021/22. It is also not possible to identify specific communication and engagement staff costs for 2010/11 for the same reasons.

Table 2: ESRC Communication & Engagement Spend by Financial Year

Financial Year	Staff Costs	Non-Staff Costs
2010/11	Not Held	Not Held
2011/12	£196,979	Not Held
2012/13	£102,302	Not Held
2013/14	£361,063	Not Held
2014/15	£128,471	Not Held
2015/16	£117,203	Not Held
2016/17	£44,928	Not Held
2017/18	£29,730	Not Held
2018/19	£6,542	Not Held
2019/20²	£0	Not Held
2020/21	£0	Not Held
2021/22	£0	Not Held
2022/23	£0	£0
2023/24	£0	£0

² All ESRC communication and engagement staff were transferred to the UKRI C&E function when it was established in 2019/20.

There is no recorded communication and engagement spend specific to ESRC for 2022/23 or 2023/24, with this being covered by the UKRI C&E function.

Communication and Engagement Spending for MRC

Table 3: MRC Head Office Communication & Engagement Spend by Financial Year

Financial Year	Staff Costs	Non-Staff Costs	Total
2010/11	£872,965	£533,572	£1,406,537
2011/12	£842,645	£697,672	£1,540,317
2012/13	£938,394	£1,214,980	£2,153,374
2013/14	£924,276	£941,900	£1,866,176
2014/15	£1,020,520	£286,657	£1,307,177
2015/16	£1,143,153	£621,522	£1,764,675
2016/17	£1,039,560	£414,844	£1,454,404
2017/18	£1,145,622	£527,047	£1,672,669
2018/19	£1,107,999	£369,197	£1,477,196
2019/20³	£296,267	£135,690	£431,956

2020/21	£205,638	£80,896	£286,534
2021/22	£211,181	£66,992	£278,173
2022/23	£225,423	£128,113	£353,536
2023/24	£246,792	£78,618	£325,410

³ Most of the MRC C&E team were transferred to the UKRI C&E team when it was established in 2019/20.

Data on the UK Dementia Research Institute, the Francis Crick Institute and Health Data Research UK (HDRUK) has not been provided as these institutes are not subject to FOI. To be subject to FOI an organisation needs to be wholly owned by a public body, which is not the case for any of these three partnership Institutes. Whilst all three receive significant MRC funding, all are independent registered charities, and jointly funded by non-public body funders, for example Alzheimer's Research UK and Alzheimer's Society, in the case of the UK Dementia Research Institute.

Furthermore, we have confirmed that no MRC staff work at these Institutes, and they do not supply services on our behalf, i.e. no contracts to carry out communications or engagement on behalf of MRC.

If you have any queries regarding our response or you are unhappy with the outcome of your request and wish to seek an internal review of the decision, please contact within the next 40 working days:

Head of Information Governance

Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: www.ico.org.uk.

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see [UKRI's complaints policy](#)¹.

Yours sincerely,


Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
foi@ukri.org | dataprotection@ukri.org

¹ <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>