

Reference: 1721402

Information Rights  
Information.requests@ofcom.org.uk

11 January 2024

## Freedom of Information: Right to know request.

Thank you for your request for information about payments to RADA or Rada Business.

We received this request on 22 November 2023 and have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”). We wrote to you on 20 December 2023 to say we needed more time to consider the public interest in withholding or disclosing the information requested – we have now concluded this consideration.

By way of background, RADA Business provide training programmes and coaching for many organisations and individuals across more than 30 countries to help people at work on their communication skills.

Rada Business’s services were engaged to help Ofcom with specific training on impact, influence and presentation skills for some colleagues. The colleagues that took part in this training hold positions in Ofcom that require them to present views, advice etc regularly, and this training was aimed at improving their skills and confidence. The initiative forms part of our commitment to professional development, tailored specifically for team members whose roles involve frequent public speaking, stakeholder engagement and/or delivering complex information to a wide range of audiences both internal and external.

## Your request and our response

*Please note that I am only interested in information generated between 20 November 2021 and the present day.*

*Please note that the reference to Ofcom in the questions below should be taken to refer only to the organisation's headquarters irrespective of where that office is based and or staff based at its headquarters.*

*1. During the aforementioned period has Ofcom made any payments to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) and or its commercial offshoot RADA Business in return for services provided?*

Yes.

*2.If the answer is yes can you please state how much the organisation has paid. Can you specify whether these payments went to RADA and or RADA business. Can you specify how much was paid to each organisation.*

Over a period of 24 months, we have paid around £90,400 (excluding VAT) to RADA Business which has included training for over 60 staff.

*3.During the relevant period have any Ofcom employees (either individually and or collectively) taken part in and or accessed any training sessions and or workshops and or professional development programmes offered by RADA and or RADA business. The training sessions and or workshops and or professional development programmes could have taken place on Ofcom premises and or on premises owned by RADA/RADA Business. Alternatively, they could have taken place in other premises. Alternatively, these training sessions and workshops and or professional development programmes could have taken place online and or remotely. These courses will include but not will not be limited to sessions on public speaking, team building, personal presentation, trust building, voice projection, leadership skills and confidence.*

Yes.

*4.If the answer to question three is yes can you provide the title of the training and or professional development package and or workshop utilised by departmental staff. In the case of each package/training session or workshop can you state how many staff took part and on what dates. In the case of each package can you provide details of a venue and a duration. In the case of each package can you state why employees were asked to take part. In the case of each training programme or workshop can you identify the skills covered.*

The training took place at Rada Business's site Rada Studio in December 2021, February, March, May, September, October and November 2022, and February, May and September 2023, and each session had between 1 to 16 participants. We worked with RADA across a number of development topics - these include both bespoke titles built specifically for Ofcom and others from the RADA catalogue, including: The Confident Communicator, Communicating with Impact & Influence, Impact & Influence for Women.

We explained above why colleagues took part in the training and the skills covered.

We have provided the approximate number of staff that have undertaken this training in the relevant period under question 2. However, we are unable to disclose how many staff took part in each training session, or details of the duration for each session that took place as we consider that this information put together with the information already given would likely prejudice both Ofcom's and Rada Business's commercial interests.

We consider that this information is exempt from disclosure 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 any person including the public authority holding it. In applying this exemption, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the

public interest in disclosing the information. In this case, we consider that the public interest favours withholding the information.

The attached Annex A to this letter sets out the exemption in full, as well as the factors Ofcom considered when deciding where the public interest lay.

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,

Information requests

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

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

- Enabling the public to gain a better understanding of the commercial relationships between Ofcom and its suppliers and the nature of the services provided, and thereby increasing public confidence in Ofcom's work.
- Generally, there is a public interest in transparency of expenditure, especially if public money is involved.

### Factors for withholding

- Companies need to be confident that information relating to their business, such as information about them as an organisation or relating to their products or services, will not be disclosed if it would, or would be likely to, prejudice their commercial interests.
- Ofcom continues to negotiate and require contracts like those related to this request. To release information that would enable the public to know the detailed cost breakdown would put Ofcom in a detrimental position for future contract negotiations and would undermine its bargaining position with potential suppliers. In addition, to release such information could prejudice the commercial interests of the supplier – in that it would provide details of the supplier's commercial offerings to its competitors or potential clients.

Reasons why public interest favours withholding information

- 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 companies 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 other contractors. If contractors could not be confident that such information provided by them to Ofcom would be withheld from disclosure, except in compelling circumstances, commercial activity may be impeded. 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 detailed breakdowns about the cost of these services were disclosed. These considerations go against the public interest in disclosing. We have disclosed the overall amount spent on the services.
- Weighing the issues presented, it is considered that on balance, the factors for withholding some of the requested information outweighs those for disclosing the information.