[redacted]

From: FOI
Sent: 31 July 2017 13:18
To: [redacted]
Subject: FOI 115/17 Name of Donor to Consitutional Research Council Response

Dear [redacted]

Our Ref: FOI 115/17

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated **11 July 2017**.

The Commission aims to respond to requests for information promptly and has done so within the statutory timeframe of twenty working days.

Your request is in bold below followed by our response.

You have requested:

In an interview with Channel 4 news it would appear that the Constitutional Research Council informed the Electoral Commission of who donated £425,000 to Constituational Research Council which was then donated to the Demorcratic Unionist Party.

Can you confirm or deny if the Electoral Commission holds details regarding the source of the donation to CRC which was then passed to the DUP.

As this entity did not donate directly to a NI political party can you confirm the source of the donation the the CRC.

Our response is as follows:

The Commission is prohibited by legislation from releasing information in relation to donations that may have been given to a registered Northern Ireland party. Section 71E of the Political Parties Elections and Referendum Act 2000 (PPERA) places a duty of confidentiality on the Commission in relation to information that relates to donations from Northern Ireland recipients or information relating to our function in this area. We consider this information exempt under section 44(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Section 44 exempts from disclosure any information if its disclosure is prohibited by any enactment. As stated, the information requested is specifically prohibited from being released by section 71E of PPERA.

We are, therefore, unable to confirm or deny as to whether or not we hold such information as you have requested.

You may wish to note that the since 2005 the Electoral Commission has consistently called for an increase in transparency so that voters in Northern Ireland can access information on how political parties are funded. The UK Government recently consulted on a draft Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill which proposes amendments to the current rules on donations and loans to increase transparency. We again called on the Government to bring the rules on the reporting of donations and loans in Northern Ireland into line with those in the rest of the UK.

I trust that this information satisfies your request. The Commission strives to be an open, transparent authority, but in some circumstances we cannot responsibly release requested information, and we ask for your understanding in this regard.

If you are not satisfied with this response, please note that the Commission operates a review procedure, details of which can be found on the Commission website at: http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/about-us/freedom-of-information-requests/how-do-I-make-an-foi-request

Please also note that if you have exhausted all internal Commission review procedures and you are still not satisfied you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner. Details of this procedure can be found on the ICO website: https://ico.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted]
Senior Information and Knowledge Adviser
The Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8YZ
FOI@electoralcommission.org.uk
electoralcommission.org.uk
yourvotematters.co.uk

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