From: FOI
To: [redacted]
Subject: FOI 122/18 - Grassroots Out and Go Movement - Response
Date: 20 August 2018 10:31:26

Dear [redacted],

Our Ref: FOI 122/18

Thank you for your email to the Electoral Commission dated **29 July 2018.**

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.

From January 2016 to the present day, I would like to request the following information:

1) All internal correspondence and communications held by the Electoral Commission that mentions, or refers to, Grassroots Out.

2) All internal correspondence and communications held by the Electoral Commission that mentions, or refers to, Go Movement.

3) All external correspondence and communications between the Electoral Commission and Grassroots Out.

4) All external correspondence and communications between the Electoral Commission and Go Movement.

I define correspondence and communications as including (but not limited to) the following:
- Emails
- Letters
- Memos
- Briefings
- Research documents
- Press clippings
- Invitations
- Presentation slides
- Notes taken during telephone conversations

Our response is as follows:

We hold the information that you have requested. However, the cost of your request exceeds the limits for time and cost set out in section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. On this occasion we will not be taking your request further. I will explain why that is and provide advice as to how you could refine your request so that we may be able to answer it.

Section 12 of the FOIA allows us to decline to answer FOI requests when we

estimate that it would cost us more than £600 (equivalent to 3.5 days' work, calculated at £25 per hour) to identify, extract and then provide the information you have requested.

A search of the Commission's records for entries regarding 'Grassroots Out' and 'Go Movement' returns a very large number of results. Although not all of the results will fall within the scope of your request, retrieving these entries and determining which of that information does fall within scope would exceed the limits for time and cost as set out above.

As an indication, we estimate that we would need to retrieve and review around 4,000 electronic records, at a rate of 15 per hour. We estimate that to retrieve and extract the number of electronic records that fall within the scope of your request would cost at least £ 6,667 and take a minimum of 267 hours. Over and above that, there are also 23 file boxes of supporting documents for the Go Movement's Lead Designation application for the 2016 EU Referendum.

We might be able to provide information you are seeking following a refined request if it was within the cost limit. You may wish to consider, for example:

- limiting the timeframe of your request
- specifying the type of communications in your request
- identifying any particular topics of communications you want to request

Please be aware that we cannot guarantee at this stage that a refined request will fall within the cost limit.

There is however information accessible to you by other means. We have published the main body of the GO Movement designation application, here. You can also see all the reported donations and spending by the two referendum campaigners Grassroots Out and GO Movement by searching on our online PFR database, which you can find on the home page of website.

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]

Access to Information Officer (FOI and DPA)

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