



**Information Commissioner's Office**  
Promoting public access to official information  
and protecting your personal information

**Press Release**  
**For immediate release**

Date: 12 February 2008

**ICO rules against the BBC withholding information**

The Information Commissioner, Richard Thomas, has ordered the BBC to disclose the name of the highest earner at BBC Northern Ireland and their pay band under the Freedom of Information Act. However, the Information Commissioner agreed with the BBC that it would be unreasonable to disclose the exact salary.

The complainant also requested information on the payments made to several named television presenters and the costs of producing John Daly's TV show. The BBC refused to disclose the information on the basis it was not a public authority with regard to the requests for information about talent costs and in-house production costs.

The Information Commissioner has ruled that the information was not held for the dominant purposes of journalism, art or literature and therefore falls within the scope of the Freedom of Information Act. However, the Information Commissioner concluded that the information relating to payments of presenters is exempt because it is personal information and release would breach the Data Protection Act. The Commissioner also found that the information relating to programme costs is exempt from disclosure as its release may prejudice the BBC's commercial interests.

In his decision, the Information Commissioner noted that there is already a significant amount of information in the public domain about the commissioning process and fees paid by the BBC to production companies.

The full decision notice can be viewed at

[http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/decisionnotices/2008/fs\\_50067416.p  
df](http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/decisionnotices/2008/fs_50067416.pdf)

## **ENDS**

If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner's  
press office on 020 7025 7580.

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Information Commissioner promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
2. The Decision Notice reference number for this case is: FS50067416
3. This decision notice by the Information Commissioner coincides with a number of decision notices involving the BBC Northern Ireland.