

Jenna Corderoy

By email: request-866076-54b92aa0@whatdotheyknow.com

27 June 2022

Dear Jenna Corderoy,

G01054: Freedom of Information Request

We refer to your request for information dated 30 May 2022 under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "Act").

Please find below your question, with the University's corresponding response.

Question

Dear University of Southampton,

In December, the Daily Express found that "UK universities admitted to "monitoring" or "listening to" their student's social media accounts". Please see here: <https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.express.co.uk%2Fnews%2Fuk%2F1535579%2FUniversities-social-media-accounts&data=05%7C01%7Cfoi%40soton.ac.uk%7C81f7153219d74bed8cb708da42642f38%7C4a5378f929f44d3ebe89669d03ada9d8%7C0%7C0%7C637895296898693858%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoIMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCJ0Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&data=6SIVWFA3MWi7DqWmKrweOT55iNfE%2FwH03jsZThC1Dwe%3D&reserved=0>

In light of this, I would like to request the following information:

(1) Please indicate whether the university is currently monitoring, or has previously monitored, students and staff's social media posts/accounts.

(2) If the university is currently monitoring, or has previously monitored, students and staff's social media posts/accounts, could you please provide reasons as to why this is the case. Please also

provide copies of policies or guidelines in relation to the monitoring of students and staff' social media posts.

(3) If the university is currently monitoring, or has previously monitored, students and staff's social media posts/accounts, could you please indicate whether this was in regards to (i) environmental protests (ii) rent strikes (iii) other protests or strike action.

(4) If the university is currently monitoring, or has previously monitored, students and staff's social media posts/accounts, could you please state whether any specific software is used.

(5) If the university is currently monitoring, or has previously monitored, students and staff's social media posts/accounts, could you please indicate whether this is carried out internally or that this function is outsourced. If it is outsourced, please provide details.

I would like to receive this information in an electronic format. If you feel that a substantive response to this request is not possible within a reasonable time frame, I would be grateful if you could contact me and provide assistance as to how I can refine the request. If you need any clarification, please contact me. I look forward to receiving a response in 20 working days. Many thanks.

Yours faithfully,

Jenna Corderoy

Answer

In accordance with [Section 1\(1\)\(a\)](#) of the Act, we confirm that the University does hold the information of the description specified in your request, in part, as some of the requested information pertaining to the scope of your request does not exist.

Question 1

The University does not currently or previously, perform any monitoring of students and staff's social media accounts.

Questions 2-5

Information pertaining to questions 2 through to 5 cannot be disclosed as they are not applicable to this University and therefore, this referenced requested information does not exist. This decision has been made after all reasonable steps have been taken to locate the referenced requested information. Whilst we acknowledge that it is the main object of the Act to provide public access to documents, we are satisfied that the referenced requested information does not exist.

If you do not feel that we have dealt with your request in accordance with the requirements of [Part I](#) of the Act, you may request a review. Your request for a review **must** specify in what respect you consider that the requirements of [Part I](#) of the Act have not been met; mere dissatisfaction with our response is insufficient. Please address your request for a review by completing the [form](#) and selecting FOI Review.

In accordance with section 5.3 of the [Code of Practice](#), a request for a review must be sent within 40 working days of the date of this letter. The University is not obliged to accept any requests for a

review beyond 40 working days. We will acknowledge your request for a review and endeavour to respond within 20 working days of its receipt but please note that a deadline for a review response is not prescribed by the Act.

The Information Commissioner is responsible for enforcing rights of access to information and the operation of the publication scheme. You may apply to the Information Commissioner in writing (FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution, Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF) or [electronically](#) for a decision whether, in any specified respect, your request for information has been dealt with by the University in accordance with the requirements of [Part 1](#) of the Act. The Information Commissioner will not normally act unless they are satisfied that the University's review procedure has been exhausted.

Yours sincerely,

for

Freedom of Information Act
Response to Information Provided by the University of Southampton
https://www.whatdotheynow.com/body/university_of_southampton