Thank you for your Freedom of Information request in which you asked for information on the use of private companies to provide public relations, social media and internal and external communications services.

The responses to your questions are provided below.

**Part 1**

1. Does your department/agency/organisation currently use a private company to undertake any of the following services:
   - Public Relations
   - Social Media Communications
   - External Stakeholder Communications
   - Internal Stakeholder Communications.

   The MRC does not use any private company to undertake services relating to Public Relations, Social Media Communications or Internal Stakeholder Communications.

   We do currently use Dods Monitoring Service and Grayling Communications Ltd to inform external stakeholder communications. These services comprise monitoring services on policy and parliamentary activity in England and Scotland respectively. Neither organisation undertakes communications on behalf of the MRC nor advises on how to do so.

2. If yes, can you please confirm:
   - When the current contract was last let
   - When the current contract expires
   - Whether the current contract has options to extend its length
   - When you expect to retender the contract.

   The contract with Dods Monitoring is managed by Research Councils UK and UK SBS Ltd on behalf of all of Research Councils. The contract was last let on 01/06/2016 and will expire on 31/05/2018.

   The contract with contract with Grayling Communications Ltd was last let on 01/09/2013. This is a rolling contract subject to a six month notice period.

   In April 2018 the MRC will become part of UK Research and Innovation, along with the other UK Research Councils, Innovate UK and Research England. Proposals for monitoring services for the whole of the new organisation are currently being developed. The tender process will be managed by UK SBS Ltd and further information will be available as details of the tender exercise are confirmed. Contact information can be found at: [http://www.uksbs.co.uk/contact/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.uksbs.co.uk/contact/Pages/default.aspx).

3. If no (to question 1 above), are you considering letting such a contract in the future and if so, do you have an approximate timetable for engaging the market? - N/A
Part 2

4. Have you used a private company to help you with any other marketing or public information campaigns in the past 2 years?

No

5. If so, could you please provide a brief overview of what those campaigns were about and approximately how long your contract with the company was for to support the campaign(s)?

N/A

I hope that you find this response to be helpful, if you are not satisfied that this response has been handled appropriately; you may appeal using the MRC's complaints procedure. Details are on the MRC website at: www.mrc.ac.uk/index/about/about-contact/about-complaints_procedure.htm. You may contact the MRC Complaints Officer at:

The Complaints Officer
Medical Research Council
14th Floor, One Kemble Street
London, WC2B 4AN.
email: customer.service@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire, SK9 5AF.
Telephone: 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.gov.uk

There is no charge for making an appeal.

Yours sincerely,