



Eddie Izzard and Wetherspoons among Brexit vote spenders Free 221224

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Comedian Eddie Izzard spent £36,229 on his campaign to keep the UK in the EU, official details of spending in this summer's referendum show.

The Labour activist was among Remain supporters who spent less than £250,000 during the campaign, according to the Electoral Commission, external.

Unite union spent £140,173 while the National Farmers Union spent £73,565.

Leave backers included Sun publisher News Group Newspapers with £96,898 and pub chain JD Wetherspoon £94,586.

Tim Martin, the boss of Wetherspoon, was one of the most outspoken supporters of Brexit in the business community. His pubs launched an advertising campaign attacking the European Commission and other organisations such as the IMF on their beer mats.

Figures published on Tuesday largely cover registered individuals and campaign groups who spent between £10,000 and £250,000 during the referendum campaign.

Details of expenditure by the official two lead campaigns – Vote Leave and Britain Stronger in Europe – and the majority of campaigners which reported spending of more than £250,000 will be released next year.

Mr Izzard, a longstanding Labour supporter who has said he would like to run for London Mayor one day, was a prominent figure during the campaign and its aftermath – addressing a number of pro-Remain rallies.

It is not clear whether he funded his campaign himself or whether he relied on donations from others. In total, Remain supporters reporting expenditure under the £250,000 threshold spent £2.9m, compared with the £1.9m spent by those supporting Leave.

Leading Remain supporters included telecoms firm Lebara, which spent £220,573, business lobby group London First which spent £101,655 and the City of London Corporation, £48,612. Others to support a Remain vote included the CWU trade union with £86,543, German photographer Wolfgang Tillmans spent £33,758 and Universities UK, which lobbies on behalf of leading universities, £69,365.

On the Leave side, prominent backers included the Grassroots Out movement, spending £219,215, the Freedom Association, £90,341 and Veterans for Britain spending £146,945.

The largest single reported spend on either side in this category was the £676,016 attributed to Darren Grimes, who submitted his invoices early – the larger spending amounts do not have to be registered until just before Christmas.

In August, it was reported that Vote Leave gave £625,000 to the fashion design student in the days before the EU referendum to persuade young voters to opt for Brexit. Mr Grimes is now head of digital for the Brexit Central website.

The Conservative Party remained neutral in the referendum but the figures show the Conservative Group for Europe spent less than £10,000. The Labour Movement for Europe spent £11,309 while the Green Party spent £48,815 on a remain vote.

The Electoral Commission said the figures were a vital part of ensuring “transparency and accountability both in how campaigners obtained funds as well as how they spent them”.

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## Date Created

29/11/2016

## Author

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