



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Legal Directorate
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Website: <https://www.gov.uk>

2 December 2016

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - REQUEST REF: 1031-16

Thank you for your email of 7 November 2016 asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 and refining your earlier request (ref: 0958-16). You asked:

“I would like to know the amount of money the FCO Legal Directorate has spent on external legal advice (the services of external law firms and barristers) for the year ending March 31st 2016.”

I can confirm that the FCO does hold information relevant to your request.

The amount spent directly by FCO Legal Directorate on the services of external lawyers for the year ending March 31st 2016 was around £150,000 (best estimate).

However, your request asked for an updated figure corresponding to that provided for each of the financial years 2010-2015 (FOI responses ref: 0167-15 and 1113-15).

As explained in our response to your most recent request (ref: 0958-16), the vast majority of external legal advice is commissioned indirectly through the Government Legal Department (GLD), which is itself a Government Department. As set out in our previous response, it is not possible to extrapolate the figure for the FCO's spend on external legal advice from the GLD invoices without a manual exercise, which would breach the cost limit in section 12 of FOIA.

However, our understanding is that the figures provided in response to your previous requests are likely to relate to both GLD and external legal spend, without any differentiation between the two. On this basis, the updated figure for the year 2015-2016 consists of £3,518,002.68 (paid to GLD) plus £150,000 (the estimate above, paid directly to external lawyers).

Yours sincerely,

Legal Directorate



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.