



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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Your ref: 408/13 FOI
Request
Our ref: RFI 5813
Date: 4 October 2013

Dear

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: External Lawyers' Fees

Thank you for your request for information about expenditure on external lawyers' fees for 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13, which we received on 9 September 2013. We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You asked:

How much was spent by your department in each of the following years on external lawyers' (or legal firms') fees?

- a - 2010-11
- b - 2011-12
- c - 2012-13

The information we have available is shown in the table below. Defra's legal team transferred to the Treasury Solicitors Department on 1 September 2011.

Year	Spend
2010/11	£263,544
2011/12	£627,381
2012/13	£372,662

Defra's finance records do not always show whether a payee is a 'legal firm' or whether the payment is for 'fees' as opposed to other things such as disbursements, other side costs etc. The data does not include advice from Treasury Solicitors, Parliamentary Counsel and Agency lawyers. Defra cannot distinguish between payments relating to fees incurred for work done for Executive Agencies as opposed to the core department. Defra do not hold data on any payments made to legal firms direct by Executive Agencies.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA, and in keeping with the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on www.gov.uk together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

I attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

I also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Jon Lowi
Defra Finance



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Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF