

Freedom of Information request

3376/201

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Information request

1. Since 6th May 2010 has any member of the ministerial team used the services of or taken advice from an outside individual and or firm for the purpose of media training and or vocal coaching and or public speaking skills and or visual presentation and or image/makeup skills?
2. If the answer to the above question is yes could you please identify the Minister(s) who has called upon the services /advice of the outside individual or firm.
3. In the case of each individual minister can you state the name of the firm(s) and or the individual(s) who provided the training and advice.
4. In the case of each minister can you state precisely what kind of training was provided and what form this took. Can you please provide the name of any individual training courses and or packages and or scenarios? In the case of each Minister can you state the cost of all training provided. In the case of each Minister can you state where and when this training took place?
5. Can you please provide copies of all correspondence and communications (including emails) between the department and the outside firm/individual which offered this training and advice. This correspondence could have predated any training or it could have occurred since.
6. In the case of each Minister can you please provide copies of any visual and written material which was given to them to assist with their training.

DWP response

I can advise that since 6 May 2010 two members of the Department's Ministerial team have used the services of an outside media training company. The table below shows the ministers concerned, the date of the training and its cost.

In all cases the training was provided by Sara Jones of Sara Jones Associates Ltd: Registered Number: 5735777, Registered Address: 9 The Shrubberies, George Lane, South Woodford, London, E18 1BD.

The Department has a contract with this company for media training that was awarded as a result of a competitive tender exercise overseen by our Commercial Directorate. It runs from 27 September 2009 to 26 July 2012 with the option of an extension for a further year.

In all cases the training consisted of one-to-one coaching in preparation for radio/TV interviews. The session on 21 July 2010 took place at the House of Commons. All the other sessions took place at the Department's Caxton House office on Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA.

I understand that these sessions were arranged on behalf of the Ministers concerned by their respective Press Secretaries. Those officials discussed the need with Sara Jones Associates Ltd by telephone.

I understand that Sara Jones Associates Ltd supplied each Minister with a Handbook in support of the coaching sessions. This Handbook was not designed specifically in support of a course commissioned by the Department and as such remains the copyright of the company.

Name of Minister	Date of Training	Cost
Minister for Disabled People Maria Miller MP	21 July 2010	£705.00
Minister for Disabled People Maria Miller MP	7 October 2010	£705.00
Minister for Welfare Reform Lord Freud	16 July 2010	£705.00
Minister for Welfare Reform Lord Freud	1 November 2010	£705.00
Minister for Welfare Reform Lord Freud	24 March 2011	£705.00