

25 September 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request – 200827015

Thank you for your request dated 27 August in which you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ):

‘Can you provide up to date figures for the legal aid payments received by the five men accused of murdering Stephen Lawrence to the present date, i) Gary Dobson, ii) David Norris, iii) Jamie Acourt, iv) Neil Acourt, and v) Luke Knight?’

Please break down the figures per individual for each case or appeal and give a total for all five.’

Your request has been handled under the FOIA.

I can confirm that the MoJ holds the information that you have requested, and I have provided it below.

The most recent costing information we hold may not necessarily be reflective of the final claim paid to the representatives involved; the billing process for publicly funded representation often takes several months to be finalised in order to allow for claims to be drawn up, submitted, considered, paid, and for any appeals against any assessments to be heard. The below information reflects the position as at the time of your request.

In 2013, under the Coalition Government, new legislation was brought in meaning that defendants must now pass a strict financial means test. Depending on their means, applicants for criminal legal aid can be required to pay contributions up to the entire cost of the defence. To assist you, we have broken down the expenditure by different time periods.

Criminals and defendants do not receive a penny of legal aid, payments are means tested and sent directly to solicitors and barristers who represent them to ensure a fair trial. Without legal representation criminals could argue their trial was unfair and convictions could be quashed.

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within two months of the date of this response.

data.access@justice.gov.uk

Disclosure Team, Ministry of Justice

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely

**Information Governance
Legal Aid Agency**

David Norris	Solicitor	Barrister	Total	Period	Period: Crime/Civil	Total
Crime: Crown court trial	£2,754.50	£2,984.14	£5,738.64	2003 to 2004	2001 to 2018	£263,029.09
	£114,731.45	£107,614.54	£222,345.99	2010 to 2012		
Crime: Court of Appeal	£3,398.41		£3,398.41	2012 to 2013		
Crime lower	£1,378.73		£1,378.73	2001 to 2004		
Crime lower	£30,167.32		£30,167.32	2008 to 2018		
Civil: Representation	£1,497.24	£3,227.00	£4,724.24	1999 to 2004		
Total	£153,927.65	£113,825.68	£267,753.33	1999 to 2018	£267,753.33	

Gary Dobson	Solicitor	Barrister	Total	Period	Period: Crime/Civil	Total
Crime: Crown court trial	£657.02	£2,066.85	£2,723.87	2010 to 2011	2002 to 2013	£460,688.27
	£100,875.14	£105,847.53	£206,722.67	2010 to 2012		
Crime: Court of Appeal	£57,976.26	£191,808.00	£249,784.26	2011 to 2013		
Crime lower	£816.49		£816.49	2002		
Crime lower	£640.98		£640.98	2010		

Civil: Representation	£5,457.83	£232.66	£5,690.49	1999 to 2001	£5,690.49
Total	£166,423.72	£299,955.04	£466,378.76	1999 to 2013	£466,378.76

Luke Knight	Solicitor	Barrister	Total	Period	Period: Crime/Civil	Total
Crime: Crown court trial						£0.00
Crime: Court of Appeal						
Crime lower						
Crime lower						
Civil: Representation	£1,665.00	£232.66	£1,897.66	1999 to 2001	1999 to 2001	£1,897.66
Total	£1,665.00	£232.66	£1,897.66	1999 to 2001	1999 to 2001	£1,897.66

Neil Acourt	Solicitor	Barrister	Total	Period	Period: Crime/Civil	Total
Crime: Crown court trial	£2,413.79	£2,843.97	£5,257.76	2000 to 2003	2000 to 2017	£28,816.14
	£1,604.51	£1,962.63	£3,567.14	2016 to 2017		
	£14,953.02	£5,038.22	£19,991.24			
Crime lower						
Crime lower						
Civil: Representation						£0.00
Total	£18,971.32	£9,844.82	£28,816.14	2000 to 2017	2000 to 2017	£28,816.14

Jamie Acourt	Solicitor	Barrister	Total	Period	Period: Crime/Civil	Total
Crime: Crown court trial						
	£40,169.36	£19,698.00	£59,867.36	2018 to 2019	2018 to 2019	£59,867.36
Crime lower			£0.00			
Crime lower			£0.00			
Civil: Representation	£829.87	£1,880.59	£2,710.46	1998 to 2000	1998 to 2000	£2,710.46
Total	£40,999.23	£21,578.59	£62,577.82	1998 to 2019	1998 to 2019	£62,577.82

Above costs include VAT and Disbursements. Disbursements are expenses incurred which although paid by the LAA directly to the providers, are then paid to other parties involved in the case.

The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) records data on legal aid granted at the police station, magistrates court or prison on a computer system which does not record all of the personal information needed to allow individuals to be conclusively identified. Initials and surnames are recorded but not full names or dates of birth. Where possible, we look at other related information to confirm that such legal aid claims relate to the individual(s) named in a Freedom of Information request so that we can include the information as appropriate, but if we are not able verify that a claim relates to the individual(s) named we cannot include it in our response.