



Government Legal Department

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Ref No: **FOI 24_539**

15 May 2024

Dear

Thank you for your email of 19 April 2024 which contained your request for information. The Government Legal Department (“GLD”) have processed your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”).

In light of the article “Womble Bond Dickinson told Post Office to hide incriminating evidence”

<https://www.rollonfriday.com/news-content/womble-bond-dickinson-told-post-office-hide-incriminating-evidence>

and similar articles in other media, please provide:

- 1. The fees paid to Womble Bond Dickinson in the financial years 2023/2024 and 2022/2023 by your organisation.*
- 2. Whether an investigation / review has already been carried out, in light of the Post Office inquiry, by your organisation into other matters which involved WBD and if so, the conclusions.*

Response

- Government Legal Department have recorded fees paid to Womble Bond Dickinson of £1,284,263 in 2022/23 and £359,485 in 2023/24.
- We have made inquiries with the teams who have commissioned work with Womble Bond Dickinson or work on matters related to the Post Office Inquiry. All of those contacted have said that they have not carried out an investigation/review in light of the Post Office inquiry into other matters which involved WBD. However, as we do not keep a central record of this information, we cannot confirm that no one in GLD has undertaken such an investigation/review. Therefore, pursuant to Section 1(1)(a) of the Act, GLD informs you that it holds the information, but not in the manner and form requested. To provide the information would trigger the cost limit exemption set out in Section 12(1) of the Act. Accordingly, GLD is applying the Section 12(1) FOIA exemption to this request.

Section 12(1) makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where it estimates the cost of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit for GLD is set at £600, which represents the cost of one person spending 24 hours determining whether the information is held, locating, extracting, and preparing the information for disclosure. To produce the information would require GLD to review all case files on its case management system to extract the information, which clearly exceeds the cost limit for

responding to an FOI request.

Should you wish to narrow your request to within the appropriate limit, GLD may be able to consider your request and advise whether a narrowed request falls within the appropriate limit. In line with our obligation to provide you with advice and assistance on narrowing your request, GLD suggests that you could narrow your request by providing a reasonable date range and being specific about the cases you seek information on.”

Your Rights

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original correspondence. Please use the contact details provided at the top of this letter in order to request an internal review relating to your original request.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
www.ICO.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

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