



Disclosure Ref: 13

Legal Aid discussions between the Crown Prosecution Service and Ministry of Justice

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Request

Request

- 1. Dates in the last 24 months of all meetings between representatives of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and representatives of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) where Legal Aid has been discussed*
- 2. Memos/minutes of meetings between the MoJ and CPS detailing discussions about legal aid provision in criminal cases*
- 3. Memos/minutes of meetings between MoJ and CPS detailing discussions about Pages of Prosecution Evidence (PPE) in criminal cases*
- 4. Memos/minutes of meetings between MoJ and CPS detailing discussions about management of evidence and unused material.*
- 5. Copies of any and all policies on the management of PPE in criminal cases*
- 6. Minutes/memos of all meetings where PPE, legal aid spend, legal aid reduction, presentation of evidence has been discussed by any government agency.*
- 7. All correspondence (email & letters) between the MoJ, CPS and/or Legal Aid Agency in respect of managing legal aid spend on criminal cases*
- 8. All correspondence (email & letters) between the MoJ, CPS and Legal Aid Agency in respect of managing PPE*
- 9. All documents held which refer to legal aid, PPE, management of evidence and unused material in criminal cases*

Response

In response to questions 1-4 and 6-8, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) staff do meet with representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), however the CPS does not keep a central log of any meetings held in which Legal Aid has been discussed. The issue of Legal Aid in criminal proceedings is a fairly common topic of debate and could potentially arise in any number of cross Criminal Justice System meetings, regardless of the original topic. In order to establish where Legal Aid had been a topic of some debate the CPS would need to manually search through the minutes of every such meeting between the CPS and the MoJ.

Section 12(1) of the Act means public authorities are not obliged to comply with a request for information if it estimates the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit for central government it is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of



one person spending 3.5 working days determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

We believe that the cost of manually reviewing all meeting records to determine the information required would exceed the appropriate limit. Consequently, we are not obliged to comply with this part of your request.

In response to questions 5 and 9, the CPS issues guidance on the payment of fees under the CPS Graduated Fee Scheme (GFS), including how PPE is remunerated. For ease of reference please see links below:

http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/finance/advocate_fee_remuneration_march_2012.html

http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/finance/fees_bulletins.html

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