

Name/address – Redaction)

Dear (Redaction)

**Freedom of Information Act - Request for Information**

**Our Reference: Fol/149**

**Your Reference: N/A**

I am writing to confirm that I am now in a position to reply to your request for information received on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2006, which asked: -

- How much did the Department spend in the years 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06 with external legal firms, specifically: -
  - a) For the provision of legal opinion on DWP issues;
  - b) For legal representation on DWP issues.

I am able to advise that the total spend in each year on external legal advice is as shown below.

2003/04 - £17.2 million

2004/05 - £15.4 million

2005/06 - £18.1 million

Unfortunately, I am unable to provide the level of detail you requested, as the only information available is that provided by our accounts payable system. This uses a single charge code for all aspects of legal spend and the totals shown above therefore include legal opinion/representation directly commissioned by the Department, as well as third party legal costs.

If you are not satisfied with my handling of your request please tell me why. I will then arrange for an internal review of your request and my actions. The review will be conducted by another officer of a more senior grade to myself who took no part in my original decision. The reviewing officer will advise you of his decision in writing.

If you are still not satisfied after we have looked at your request again, you can then ask the Information Commissioner to look into the way your request has been handled. The Commissioner is an independent officer who is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen and reports directly to Parliament. The Commissioner can see all the papers about your

request and decide whether my decision is fair and meets the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

The Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
Fax: 01625 524 510  
E-mail: <http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk>

Yours Sincerely

(Redaction)

Redactions made under section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act (Personal Information).