

FOI RESPONSE ISSUED - 6 June 2023

REQUEST

Over the past financial year, for Mental Health Legal Aid matters, how much was paid to psychiatrists to prepare reports?

And what % is that of the total spend on Mental Health legal aid for that year

OUR RESPONSE TO THE INFORMATION REQUEST UNDER THE 2002 ACT

In answering your questions I have queried the SLAB database that contains information on payments to solicitors. The majority of that information is derived from detailed accounts submitted online by solicitors. Some accounts are still submitted by paper and whilst they have detailed verification attached - that verification is not automatically captured in our information database.

This distinction is important in answering your question as to identify payments specifically for reports by psychiatrists I can only answer from the information submitted with online accounts.

Looking at the last financial year 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 the total spend on Mental Health legal aid, inc VAT, was:

£3,889,000

Of that £1,180,000 was spent on outlays. Outlays is a term that covers non-fee payments on legal aid cases and includes the costs of expert reports from, for example, psychiatrists.

And of that total spend on outlays I can see that 80% was made via online accounts that contain the detailed information that enables me to identify payments specifically for reports by psychiatrists.

Querying this information I can see that £646,000 (inc VAT) was spent on payments specifically for reports by psychiatrists.

But as I noted above this £646,000 is only for 80% of all outlays.

So to make a valid comparison with the total spend on mental health I will pro rate this up to 100%.

Thus 646,000 divided by 80 and times 100 gives a total estimate of £807,500 for the spend on reports by psychiatrists in the financial year 2022-23.

Which then allows me to answer your second question:

what % is that of the total spend on Mental Health legal aid:

807,500 divided by 3,889,000 = 21%