

Legal and Governance

4 Abbey Orchard Street
London
SW1P 2BS

DX:328 London

t: (020) 7783 7000

f: (020) 7783 7633

www.legalservices.gov.uk

Mr Neil Hood

Our ref: L&G/FOI –10/4025

Date: 9 March 2010

By email only: request-28712-6d37ac12@whatdotheyknow.com

Dear Mr Hood

RE: YOUR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOI) REQUEST

Thank you for email of 10 February 2010.

In your request you have asked for the following information under the FOI Act:

"1. Does this mean that the Great British public can now start looking forward to the LSC reclaiming the £1,342,465 of Legal Aid money given to millionaire Ernest Saunders and to similarly rich, blatant abusers of the Legal Aid system? Or will wealthy individuals like these continue to enjoy protection from Legal Aid repayments?"

2. Is there a time limit to claiming back money given as Legal Aid?"

I can confirm that the Legal Services Commission does not hold the information you have requested.

The LSC took over financial responsibility on 1 April 2003 for Crown Court legal aid payments. The Ernest Saunders case was in 1990. The Her Majesty's Court Service (HMCS) may be able to assist you with information in relation to this case. The HMCS website is:

<http://www.hmcs-courts-service.gov.uk/publications/misc/foi/index.htm>.

The Legal Aid in Criminal and Care Proceedings General Regulations 1989 made provision for the court to make a contribution order against defendants in criminal proceedings. The magistrates' court made the contribution order from income or capital. At the end of a case, the Crown Court had power to make a legal aid order against a guilty defendant, and these were remitted to the magistrates' court for enforcement. The Westminster Magistrates' court deals with the remaining legal aid orders from the London Crown Courts.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us at the above address. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future correspondence.



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Criminal
Defence Service



Community
Legal Service

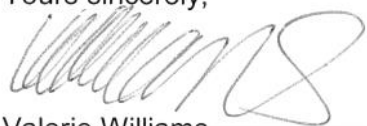


community
legal advice

0845 345 4 345

www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Valerie Williams', written in a cursive style.

Valerie Williams

Legal & Governance Team
