

28 May 2014

Dear Mr Matthews

Freedom of information request – Estyn's legal services

I am writing in response to your request, under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to be provided with information on the following:

- 1 How much did the Council spend on external legal advice / services in the 2013/14 financial year?
- 2 Please provide a list of all firms and barristers used in that period to provide external legal advice / services.
- 3 Please identify all of the contracts and arrangements that exist between the Council and the firms or persons identified in answering (2) for the provision of legal or consultancy services.
- 4 Do you have an in-house legal team or employ any lawyers? If so, please provide a organisational diagram which shows how many employees make up the team and their role (i.e. solicitor / paralegal).

Under the FOIA, Estyn is required to:

- (i) confirm or deny whether it holds the information of the description specified in the request; and
- (ii) communicate the information requested to the applicant. You should note that this is effectively a decision that the information can be released into the public domain and not simply to the specified applicant.

There are a number of exemptions under the FOIA which impact on these obligations

I can confirm that the Estyn holds the information you are seeking:

- 1 In the 2013-2014 financial year, Estyn spent a total of £33,257 on external legal advice and services.
- 2, 3 Estyn's legal services were provided under the arrangement of a single contract, between Estyn and Geldards LLP. This contract is shortly to be re-tendered, and the specification will be available soon through the Bravo procurement database.
- 4 Estyn does not have an in-house legal team or employ any lawyers.

If you are not satisfied with the decision Estyn has taken regarding your request for information, you are entitled to request that we review the matter. Your request for a review should be addressed to Lisa Jordaan, Feedback and Complaints Manager, and received no later than 20 working days after the date of this communication.

If you are still not satisfied, you also have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House, Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 745
Fax: 01624 524510

Email: enquiries@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'R W Gairey', is placed within a white rectangular box.

Robert Gairey
Publications Manager