

Poppy Damon
request-586653-7b5c26ce@whatdotheyknow.com

24 July 2019

Dear Poppy Damon,

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request 190703020

Thank you for your request received 3rd July 2019 in which you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ):

I'm looking for information regarding the bereavement services which are available in your university or college. Please could you answer the following: +Do you offer special provisions for counselling services for students +specific to bereavement? Y/N Do you offer any support or counselling +services for students? Y/N Do you have an institution wide +policy/guidance regarding caring for students following a bereavement? Y/N Do your policies or practices exclusively relate to support for students who have lost parents or does your support factor in other forms of bereavement, such as losing a sibling? +Can you tell me what special provision you have for offering extensions and academic breaks in study after a bereavement? +How much money did you allocate to counselling and support services for bereavement per year (Jan 2016-Jan 2019)? +If you feel you would like to offer an opinion, would you say your institution feels you are offered enough from the Government in order to support students who have experienced bereavement while studying?

Your request has been handled under the FOIA.

I can confirm that the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) does not hold the information that you have requested. This is because information pertaining to the training of the judiciary is for their purposes only and the judiciary are not deemed to be a public body for the purposes of FOIA (they are not listed under Schedule 1). The request therefore falls outside of FOIA. In addition, the information relating to the training history of judges is personal data (judicial training records) and is therefore exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FOIA.

The following information is provided on a discretionary basis and outside of FOIA

Across England and Wales there is a network of leadership judges, presiding judges (in the courts), Chamber Presidents (in the tribunals) and Bench Chairmen (in the Magistrates' Courts) to whom judges and judicial office-holders may turn for pastoral help and support. A confidential counselling support helpline is available for the judiciary. Oversight of the outsourcing of this helpline is managed by another part of the Judicial Office, and the cost of providing the service is held commercially in confidence.

Some general background information provided outside of FOIA

The Judicial College is a constituent part of the Judicial Office, which is an office of the Ministry of Justice. The Judicial Office exists to support the senior judiciary in exercising their statutory duties under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 under which the Lord Chief Justice became the Head of the Judiciary in England and Wales.

The Judicial College has approximately 70 officials who work with the judiciary and support them in facilitating the delivery of training to the approximately 23,000 judges and judicial office-holders in England and Wales. The core principle is that it is judges who train judges who sit in the different jurisdictions: criminal, civil, family, youth, magistrates' courts, and the various tribunals. The Judicial College employs a small number of professional trainers who coach judges in how to be effective trainers. The priorities of the Judicial College are set by the Judicial Executive Board (JEB) which is chaired by the Lord Chief Justice. The Chairman of the Judicial College, a Court of Appeal judge, is also a member of JEB. The governance and overall direction of the operations of the College is overseen by the Judicial College Board.

Judges attend training seminars and events organised by the Judicial College as judicial delegates. They are not categorised as 'students'. Judges are appointed by the independent Judicial Appointments Commission. All judges come from a professional legal background and are experts in the law in the jurisdictions in which they sit; and they keep up to date with developments in law, case management, practice directions, and so on. The Judicial College does not, therefore, train judges in the law; rather, the focus is on helping judges to best manage court proceedings and to treat all court users fairly and appropriately, as well as to enhance their judge craft skills including a focus on, for example, judicial ethics, diversity and equal treatment.

Newly appointed judges undergo compulsory induction training. Thereafter, all judges – whether they are full-time salaried or part-time fee-paid – can attend a minimum two-day residential training seminar each year. Those authorised to sit in more than one jurisdiction may undertake additional training annually. Judges book their places on seminars using the Judicial College's dedicated Learning Management System. If there is a good reason for a judicial delegate to have to cancel their course booking – for example, due to a bereavement – they incur no penalty for doing so and may book themselves onto another similar seminar at a later date and in line with the course programme detailed in the annual training prospectus.

Appeal Rights

If you are not satisfied with this response you have the right to request an internal review by responding in writing to one of the addresses below within two months of the date of this response.

data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Disclosure Team, Ministry of Justice, 10.38, 102 Petty France, London, SW1H 9AJ

You do have the right to ask the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to investigate any aspect of your complaint. However, please note that the ICO is likely to expect internal complaints procedures to have been exhausted before beginning their investigation.

Yours sincerely,

David Hall

David Hall
Judicial College