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Mr Stewart Jackson MP
House of Commons
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16 June 2011

Dear Stewart:

HIGHEST PAID BARRISTERS AND SOLICITOR FIRMS IN 2009-10

You recently tabled a question on those in receipt of the highest amounts paid from legal aid in the provision of legal services and I said that I would write to you;

Mr Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what payments were made to the 20 (a) firms and (b) barristers who received the highest total level of payments from the (i) criminal defence service scheme and (ii) the community legal service scheme in the latest period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [44882]

Mr Djanogly: It is not possible to provide the information in the time available, I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy in the House of Commons Library.

8 Mar 2011 : Column 1050W

The information has now been provided by the Legal Services Commission as set out in the enclosed tables along with the appropriate caveats.

I will place a copy of this letter together with the enclosed tables in the House of Commons library.

JONATHAN DJANOGLY

Highest payments to solicitors firms and barristers from Legal Aid in 2009/10

The lists showing the highest gross payments to barristers paid from the Criminal Defence Service and the Community Legal Service, as well as the highest gross payments to solicitor firms paid through the Criminal Defence Service and the Community Legal Service, are shown below.

The lists should be read in conjunction with the caveats below to gain a full understanding of what the figures represent.

Solicitor Firms

Highest Paid Firms* - Criminal Defence Service (year ending 31 March 2010)

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| TUCKERS SOLICITORS | £10,293,997 |
| EBR ATTRIDGE | £6,870,842 |
| THE JOHNSON PARTNERSHIP | £6,765,248 |
| NOBLE SOLICITORS | £4,955,112 |
| FORBES SOLICITORS | £4,916,914 |
| DAVID PHILLIPS & PARTNERS | £4,504,456 |
| CARTWRIGHT KING SOLICITORS | £4,451,652 |
| HINE & ASSOCIATES | £3,887,676 |
| BHATIA BEST SOLICITORS | £3,778,767 |
| J D SPICER & CO | £3,651,787 |
| KAIM TODNER SOLICITORS | £3,472,400 |
| STEVENS SOLICITORS | £3,355,654 |
| MCCORMACKS | £3,284,419 |
| MARTIN MURRAY & ASSOCIATES | £3,221,061 |
| STERNBERG REED | £3,163,418 |
| FRISBY & CO | £3,155,304 |
| BLACKFORDS LLP | £3,139,920 |
| KANGS SOLICITORS | £3,110,851 |
| HOWELLS LLP | £3,031,163 |
| JOSEPH HILL & CO | £3,030,350 |

* In addition to the private firms listed above, the Public Defender Service (PDS) a publicly administered body providing legal advice and representation received £2,716,000 in 2009-10

Highest Paid Firms* - Community Legal Service (year ending 31 March 2010)

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| DUNCAN LEWIS SOLICITORS | £15,324,028 |
| BLAVO & COMPANY SOLICITORS | £5,994,951 |
| STEPHENSONS LLP | £5,770,453 |
| SWITALSKI'S | £5,766,187 |
| FISHER MEREDITH LLP | £5,267,680 |
| HOWELLS LLP | £4,179,467 |
| WILSON & CO | £4,045,824 |
| IRWIN MITCHELL LLP | £3,721,523 |
| HODGE JONES & ALLEN LLP | £2,634,143 |
| EDWARDS DUTHIE | £2,560,719 |
| BLAKEMORES | £2,480,773 |
| FOOT ANSTEY | £2,423,371 |
| LAWRENCE LUPIN SOLICITORS LTD | £2,371,212 |
| JACKSON & CANTER LLP | £2,349,427 |
| T V EDWARDS LLP | £2,325,716 |
| DAVID GRAY SOLS | £2,263,977 |
| HALLIDAY REEVES LAW FIRM | £2,246,013 |
| BURKE NIAZI SOLICITORS & ADVOCATES | £2,200,706 |
| DAVIS & SIMMONDS & DONAGHEY | £2,120,258 |
| FORBES SOLICITORS | £2,044,796 |

* In addition to the firms listed above, the legal aid budget also funded services provided by the following not-for-profit organisations with charitable status during 2009-10. Contract funding to the Immigration Advisory Service of £ 16,401,329; contract funding to Refugee and Migrant Justice of £13,020,540. Law for All received £1,788,570

1. The figures represent payments made in the financial year 2009-10. They include payments for work done in previous years – in some cases over a number of earlier years. For example cases may well have lasted more than one year, overall payments may have been increased by one exceptional case lasting a number of years which have been paid in 2009-10 or there may have been delays in submitting relevant claims.
2. All the figures listed are inclusive of VAT as paid, and disbursements incurred (e.g. travelling and medical report fees). Individuals must pay that VAT to HM Revenue & Customs.
3. While these figures represent payments actually made to the organisations during the year, other parties may in the future repay some of this money to the Community Legal Service (CLS) Fund. This will happen in cases where the legally aided party wins the case and recovers costs from the opponent. Once those costs are recovered the legally aided party's solicitor refunds some or all of the money to the CLS Fund. In some cases where costs are recovered from the losing party the actual cost to the CLS Fund may be very little or even nothing. Costs can also be recovered from a legal aid client when they gain financially from a successful legal action.

In the Criminal Defence Service, when a case is completed, a crown court judge can order a defendant who is found guilty to repay all of their legal aid costs by issuing a Recovery of Defence Costs Order (RDCO).

4. Organisations will have to pay wages for solicitors, caseworkers, support staff and overheads, such as office costs or management out of these payments. In addition payments from the LSC will also cover disbursements paid to barristers and interpreters for work carried out in relation to cases being handled by the organisation.
5. Previously the Legal Services Commission has released figures for solicitors firms on the basis of the top-earning 'offices'. In order to provide figures on a more meaningful basis, amounts provided in the table combine individual account numbers and offices to give figures for firms overall.

Barristers

Highest Paid Barristers - Community Legal Service (year ending 31 March 2010)

| | |
|-----------------------|----------|
| PAUL M STOREY QC | £582,374 |
| JEREMY G ROSENBLATT | £470,530 |
| IAN J C PEDDIE QC | £391,527 |
| MICHAEL J KEEHAN QC | £379,911 |
| SIMEON A MASKREY QC | £352,774 |
| ELIZABETH A GUMBEL QC | £331,622 |
| DAVID HUGH SOUTHEY QC | £319,388 |
| JONATHAN L BAKER QC | £306,202 |
| PAMELA SCRIVEN QC | £305,397 |
| JAMES H H TILLYARD QC | £301,988 |
| LORNA G MEYER QC | £301,200 |
| SALLY F BRADLEY QC | £299,386 |
| ANTHONY P HAYDEN QC | £291,108 |
| PAUL ANDREW WRIGHT | £264,761 |
| MARTIN B SPENCER QC | £263,896 |
| HENRY J WITCOMB | £242,186 |
| DAWN TIGHE | £241,301 |
| HENRY J SETRIGHT QC | £240,238 |
| K ARMSTRONG | £236,373 |
| CHRISTINE JOHNSON | £224,302 |

Highest Paid Barristers - Criminal Defence Service (year ending 31 March 2010)

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Mr Leonard Smith QC | £841,960 |
| Mr Nigel Sangster QC | £683,579 |
| Mr Nigel Lithman QC | £637,166 |
| Mr Balbir Singh | £634,929 |
| Mr Mukhtar Hussain QC | £629,237 |
| Mr Joel Bennathan QC | £592,610 |
| Ms Maura McGowan QC | £528,792 |
| Mr Howard Godfrey QC | £480,964 |
| Mr Charles A Bott Q.C. | £462,445 |
| Mr Abdul S Iqbal | £448,836 |
| Mr Nigel Ingram | £441,728 |
| Mr Icah Peart QC | £421,811 |
| Mr Patrick Upward QC | £413,924 |
| Mr Mark Milliken-Smith QC | £407,608 |
| Ms Frida Hussain | £404,186 |
| Mr G A Carter-Stephenson Q.C. | £399,010 |
| Mr Malcolm L Bishop QC | £398,006 |
| Mr Mark Kelly | £394,401 |
| Mr Henry Blaxland Q.C. | £393,015 |
| Mr John Ryder Q.C. | £387,376 |

These figures must be interpreted carefully and do not represent the personal earnings of the individuals listed in any one year. There are a number of reasons for this.

1. The amounts paid may represent payments for work covering many years, for a variety of cases. The amount an individual receives in any year fluctuates widely, and is to a large extent due to the variety of payment processes and schemes used by the Legal Services Commission and the Courts. Fluctuations could also be attributed to legacy payments from cases paid under the old system of individual case assessment where payments were made once the case had finished, prior to the introduction of VHCC (very high cost case) contracts.
2. The amount attributed to a barrister may include payments subsequently made to other barristers as remuneration for work carried out on behalf of the named barrister. Conversely, the figures exclude payments to the named barrister when they have carried out work on behalf of a colleague.
3. All the figures listed are inclusive of VAT as paid, and disbursements incurred (e.g. travelling). Individuals must pay that VAT to HM Revenue & Customs.
4. Barristers pay a percentage of their fees towards professional overheads. Additionally, barristers face the same expenses as any other self employed person, including income tax and National Insurance contributions.

5. Barristers who were not members of the VHCC panel were paid through the solicitor firm leading the case. Where the barrister can be identified from the disbursements paid to the solicitor firm, the payment was included.
6. Payments are made only after claims are scrutinised by the Legal Services Commission or the Courts, and where necessary adjusted. The Legal Services Commission and the Courts may make payments in a different financial year after a case has concluded. The payments included in the list, only relate to cases heard in the Crown Court.
7. While these figures represent gross payments actually made to the barristers during the year, some of those monies have been (or may in the future be) repaid to the Community Legal Service (CLS) fund by other parties. This will happen in cases where the legally aided party wins the case and recovers costs from the opponent. Once those costs are recovered the legally aided party's solicitor refunds some or all of the money to the CLS fund. As a consequence the figures may not reflect the actual cost of the barristers' fees to the fund. In some cases where costs are recovered from the losing party the actual cost to the CLS fund may be very little or even nothing.
8. Where possible, amounts have been verified by practitioners and adjusted where necessary.
9. For the CDS, not all payments are recorded centrally in a way that can be attributed to a barrister. Also not all payments made to barristers are recorded in the database used to compile the list. These include manual legal aid payments and a small number of bills paid on account and payments made in the high court. Therefore, it is possible that the list could change in future following the inclusion of such payments in light of further information and subsequent verification.