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| REDACTED | Area G-GOAGVictoria QuayEdinburgh EH6 6QQDate 02.11.15 |

Dear REDACTED

**Freedom of Information Request**

Thank you for your email of 05 October 2015 requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).  You asked:

“I would like to know the amount of money your department spent on the services of external law firms and barristers over each of the last five years (years ending March 31). If this is not possible within the restrictions of the Freedom of Information Act, three years of data will suffice. If this is not possible, two years of data are acceptable.

Please exclude legal services provided by the Government Legal Department. However, please include legal services that the Government Legal Department has outsourced to a third party”.

We have now completed our search for information.  The Office of the Advocate General (OAG) has not spent any money on the services of external law firms over the last five years. However OAG instructs counsel in relation to court actions in Scotland in which the Advocate General is a party or has intervened.  This may include appearing in court on behalf of the Advocate General and advice in relation to the case.  The following figures include such costs together with costs for any advice obtained from counsel unconnected with court proceedings.  Accordingly, the cost to the Office of the Advocate General for external legal services, excluding legal fees recovered by this Office, in the years requested is as follows:

2014-2015 £30,943.46

2013-2014     £81,211.57

2012-2013     £81,236.77

2011-2012     £54,425.80

2010-2011     £80,065.00

In some cases, part of these costs will have been recovered  from other UK Government departments where they have an interest in the proceedings

You may, if dissatisfied with the treatment of your request, ask the Office of the Advocate General to conduct an internal review of its decision.  The internal review will be conducted by someone other than the person who took the initial decision.  Requests for internal review should be addressed to the Information Officer, Office the Advocate General, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ.

If following the internal review you remain dissatisfied with the treatment of your request by OAG then you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner, whose address is Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.  Details of the complaints procedure can be found here:

<http://www.ico.gov.uk/complaints/freedom_of_information.aspx>

Yours sincerely

REDACTED