

Via email: [REDACTED]

FOI 685/18-19

2 August 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email dated 4 July 2018 in which you asked for information in relation to the case brought against Damien McLaughlin. Your request has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act creates rights of access for any person making a request for information to a public authority. The rights of access are twofold. First, to be informed by the public authority if it holds information of the description specified in the request, and if that is the case, secondly, to be provided with that information. These rights are subject to important limitations, which are designed to achieve a proper balance between the right to know and considerations of law and policy in the broader public interest.

You had asked the following:

"Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request details in relation to the case brought against Damien McLaughlin.

Please disclose the following:

- 1. The overall cost to the PPS of the case, from its inception to present.*
- 2. If possible, a breakdown of these costs."*

In response I can advise that in the absence of detailed records of time spent on individual cases it is not possible to produce precise costs for a particular case or even average costs for a particular type of case. This is because the amount of time required to take individual decisions as to prosecution will vary depending upon a range of factors including the complexity of the case, the extent of the case papers and any other work in hand. As the PPS does not charge clients for work done there is no business need for such detailed records to be maintained.

Some costs are identifiable however, including, for example, the fees paid to prosecuting counsel and expenses paid to witnesses.

In this case the total identifiable PPS cost to date are as follows:

Counsel Costs £39,821.50

Witness Expenses: £62.00

Therefore, the PPS total costs to date is £39,883.50

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review in accordance with our review procedure. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of this response and you can do so by writing to the Head of Central Management Unit, Public Prosecution Service, Belfast Chambers, 93 Chichester Street, BELFAST, BT1 3JR or alternatively by sending an e-mail to info@ppsni.gov.uk. You should state clearly the grounds on which you are requesting the review.

Alternatively, you may wish to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow

Cheshire

SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JGC' or similar, written in a cursive style.

PPS FOI Section