



Our ref: xxxxx

19 July 2007

Your ref:

Dear xxxxxxxxxxxx

Subject: Freedom of Information Reques. Money owed to Courts in England and Wales

Thank you for your e-mail of 19th March 2007 in which you sought information about the amounts owed to courts in England and Wales as of 2nd March 2007, and the corresponding amounts as of 2nd March 2006 and 2nd March 2005 from the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). Your request was received on 19th March 2007, and is now being handled by the newly formed Ministry of Justice, which DCA became part of on 9th May 2007. I would like to apologise for the unacceptable delay in replying to your request.

Following investigations, I can confirm that the Department does hold information relating to your request.

However, the Department does not hold information relating to outstanding financial penalties on the dates specified in your request, as figures are collated on a monthly basis, and it is not therefore possible to provide figures for a specific date. Additionally, while the figures provided for courts in the London area in the previous FOI release on this subject were broken down to individual courts, or groups of courts, we do not hold information at this level of detail for England and Wales, as this data is not collated on a national basis. In order to create this data, a considerable amount of work would be required, and there is no requirement under the Act to create data in response to a request, and accordingly this information is not held for the purposes of Act.

I am pleased to be able to enclose a spreadsheet which provides details of the amount of outstanding fines as of 31st March 2006 and 31st March 2007. The outstanding balance is a total of all monies owed to the court, irrespective of arrears status.

Furthermore, the Department does hold information relating to the overall amount of financial penalties outstanding at the end of the 2004/05 financial year, but this information is exempt information under Section 21 (Reasonably Accessible) of the Freedom of Information Act. This is because the information is available on the Department's website, and is therefore reasonably accessible to you by other means. You can find this information in the Magistrates' Courts Business Returns Report for 2004/05, at the following internet address:

<http://www.dca.gov.uk/magist/report0405.htm>



If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. If you wish to request an internal review please contact:

Access Rights Unit
Ministry of Justice
Post Point 6.17
Selborne House
54-60 Victoria Street
London
SW1E 6QW

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right 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

Internet: <http://www.ico.gov.uk>

Yours sincerely

David Barlow