

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO H.M. ATTORNEY GENERAL
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 3rd NOVEMBER 2009**

Question

“How much has it cost to date for the UK’s Central Office for Information (COI) to provide press liaison services to the media in respect of the recent drugs case in the Royal Court?

Will H.M. Attorney General provide full details of all sums paid to the COI for the provision of such services from 1st January 2008 to date, including the costs apportioned for the historic child abuse trials?

Will H.M. Attorney General explain why press liaison services are being provided by a UK agency for the current prosecution when the States of Jersey Police employs a full time press liaison officer? Can H.M. Attorney General advise whether the States police press officer is precluded from or unable to provide the service to the media in the current prosecution?

Will H.M. Attorney General provide a full breakdown of all press liaison costs for the current prosecution when it is concluded?”

Answer

The Attorney General has no control over or responsibility for the actions of either the Judicial Greffe or the Royal Court. In order, however, that an answer to this question can be provided to Members the Attorney General has made inquiries and has been provided with the following information:

Following consultation with the Judicial Communications Office at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, the UK’s Central Office of Information (COI) was engaged by the Judicial Greffe to provide specialist media information and management services to the Jersey Courts in the matter of high-profile trials, having regard to the media frenzy which erupted in February 2008, concerning Haut de la Garenne.

The Jersey Courts are not themselves resourced to provide such specialist media information and management services and the COI was engaged to field and handle press inquiries from the local, regional and national media, including such news providers as the Press Association and the Sky satellite organization.

The press liaison officer employed by the States of Jersey Police is not available to provide services to the Courts or to the Judicial Greffe.

Attendant services have since been provided by COI to the Jersey Courts at a total cost, to date, of approximately £101,000, being referable to the following high-profile cases, inclusive of the construction and maintenance of the Jersey Courts website (www.jerseycourts.je):

Attorney General v Michael Aubin - Haut de la Garenne
Attorney General v Claude James Donnelly - historic sexual abuse
Attorney General v Gordon John Wateridge - Haut de la Garenne
Attorney General v Curtis Warren and 5 associates - conspiracy to import drugs

Full details of costs directly referable to the mentioned cases will be provided as soon as they are available. It is assumed that the “current prosecution” refers to the case of the Attorney General v Warren and others mentioned above which resulted recently in a conviction.