

News Release  
Thursday 27 November 2008



**COURTS MINISTER BACKS RELEASE OF  
LEGAL AID PAYMENTS DATA**

The Minister for the Northern Ireland Court Service, Bridget Prentice MP, has welcomed today's release of information about solicitors' and barristers' earnings from legal aid by the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission.

Disclosure of payments from the legal aid budget for the years 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 follows the Commission's commitment to make these details public. The Commission will in the future publish this information on an annual basis.

Responding to today's announcement, Bridget Prentice said:

**"The Government is committed to openness, transparency and accountability, especially when it comes to how public money is spent.**

**"The legal aid budget is a scarce resource and it is important that the taxpayer who funds legal aid is able to see how this money is being spent.**

**"I welcome the steps taken by the Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission today and its commitment to release this data annually."**

Ends.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Bridget Prentice MP is Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice with responsibility for the operation of the courts and the legal aid scheme in Northern Ireland, both of which are reserved matters.
2. The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission published details of payments made to solicitors and defence counsel for publicly funded legal services today. Further information can be accessed from: [www.nilsc.org.uk](http://www.nilsc.org.uk)
3. Copies of consultation documents issued by the Northern Ireland Court Service on the reform of criminal legal aid can be accessed from the Northern Ireland Court Service website at: [www.courtsni.gov.uk](http://www.courtsni.gov.uk)

If you have any further queries about this or other court related matters please contact:

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