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Keeping our communities safe

Freedom of Information Office
Information Disclosure Unit
Woodhill House, Westburn Road
Aberdeen
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Our Ref: FOI/384/09/JS
Your Ref:

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www.grampian.police.uk

Date: 31 July 2009

Dr Geraint Bevan

By Email

Dear Dr Bevan,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST 384/09

I refer to your email of 21 July 2009, in which you requested information in terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

I have repeated your request hereunder, for your ease of reference;

STV reports that Grampian Police will confiscate passports that are used fraudulently as proof-of-age by people other than the legitimate holders and that the documents will not be returned to those holders, who will have to purchase new ones. Can you please let me know what communication, if any, Grampian Police has had with the Identity & Passport Service regarding this policy?

I have made enquiry within the Force and I can advise that Grampian Police has had dialogue with the Identity & Passport Service in regard to this matter and the Force policy on this topic follows on from guidance that they provided to all Police Forces in March 2006. Therefore the guidance provided to Officers within the Force standard operating procedure on lost and found property is based on advice from the Identity and Passport Service. The relevant excerpt from the Force procedure is below,

Passports

"When a found UK Passport has been deposited with the Police, a Found Report will be created in accordance with the procedures detailed in this document.

Prior to being deposited with the Police, if a UK Passport has been left by the holder at a place where it could not be fraudulently used, such as a post office, bank, shop or where the Lost and Found Property Officer is satisfied that it could not have been fraudulently used, then it may be returned to the holder should they present themselves to claim ownership. In any other circumstances, the Passport will not be returned to the owner and will be forwarded by the Lost and Found Property Officer to the Identity and Passport Service (formerly the UK Passport Service).

When a found foreign Passport/Identity Card has been deposited with the

Police, a Found Report will also be created in accordance with the procedures detailed in this document.

Should the owner of said Passport/Identity Card present himself or herself at a Police Station to claim it, the Passport/Identity Card should be returned to that person, providing that it appears genuine and has not been interfered with.

Non-UK Passports, Identity Cards and other travel documents are to be retained for at least 24 hours before the LFPO forward them to the National Document Fraud Unit, PO Box 1000, Hayes, Middlesex, UB3 5WB."

In essence, if a passport holder has knowingly given their document to a friend/sibling etc and it has been out of the control of the owner/holder and could have been fraudulently used, it cannot be returned to the owner and therefore must be returned to the Identity and Passport Service.

The cost of the return or re-issue of the passport (£112) is a fee set by the Identity & Passport Service.

I hope that this information is helpful to you.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries. However, if you are not satisfied with the way in which your request has been dealt with, you are entitled, in the first instance, to request a review of the decision made by the Force. Should you wish to proceed, please write to Iain Gray, Head of Information Disclosure Unit, Grampian Police, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5AB, within 40 working days of receiving this letter, stating clearly that you request a review and the decisions you wish reviewed.

If, after having been informed of the review decision you are still not satisfied, you are entitled to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner for a decision within six months of the date of the review response. Contact details are Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9DS, telephone 01334 464610.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Jody Stewart
Assistant Manager – Freedom of Information