



Home Office

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Ganesh Sittampalam
[Request-21471-
da3384aa@whatdotheyknow.com](#)

Our Ref: 13434
Your ref:

Date: 22 January 2010

Dear Mr Sittampalam

I am writing further to my e-mail of 3 December about your request for an internal review of the Home Office response to your Freedom of Information request about grants made to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO).

I have now completed the review. I have examined all the relevant papers and have consulted the policy unit which provided the original response. I am very sorry the reply to your request was sent to you late and that your request was not considered to be valid.

My findings are set out in the attached report. You will see in the report that the Police Reform Unit (PRU) will consider your request again starting at the top of the list of grants and if there is sufficient time available with the 24 hours allowed per request, will then proceed down that list. A reply should be sent direct from PRU no later than 11 February.

This completes the internal review process by the Home Office. If you remain dissatisfied with the response to your Fol request, you have the right of complaint to the Information Commissioner at the following address:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

Steve Kirk

Internal review report

Internal review of response to request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 by Mr Ganesh Sittampalam (reference 13434)

Responding Unit: Police Reform Unit (PRU)

Chronology

Original Fol request received:	21 October 2009
Target date to reply:	18 November 2009
Response sent:	30 November 2009

Subject of request

1. In April last year, Mr Sittampalam was provided with a list of grants made by the Home Office to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) during the period 2006-09 in reply to request number 11435. This latest request followed-on from the earlier one and asks for a copy of each contract listed in the reply to the previous request detailing the purpose of each grant, but if this would exceed the cost limit, the Home Office should supply as many contracts as possible, starting from the first one on the list working downwards.

The response by PRU

2. The reply sent to Mr Sittampalam apologised for the delay in writing to him explaining that due to an oversight, incoming correspondence was not properly monitored and actioned.

3. The request itself was refused as PRU were unclear about the exact scope of the request and sought clarification from Mr Sittampalam. PRU said that the request was not valid as they had no means of distinguishing which contracts from the list were requested and asked Mr Sittampalam which specific information from the list he wanted. No response was received from Mr Sittampalam.

Mr Sittampalam's request for an internal review

4. Mr Sittampalam gave no reasons for asking for an internal review of this case.

Procedural issues

5. The reply was sent to Mr Sittampalam late due to the absence of a correspondence manager in PRU resulting in the request being overlooked. Whilst this was an unfortunate error, it does not alter the fact that the Home Office breached section 10 of the Act by not replying within the required 20 working days.

6. On balance, I am satisfied that the request made by Mr Sittampalam was valid and met section 8 (1) (c) of the Fol Act. He clearly asked for copies of any contracts or agreements detailing precisely what each grant was for. Mr Sittampalam continued by saying that if the cost limit would be breached by providing all documents listed, the Home Office should supply as much information as possible starting from the first entry on the list and working down that list.

7. PRU did offer Mr Sittampalam advice and assistance to refine his request as required under section 16 of the Fol Act by suggesting that he named a number of specific grants he was interested in. However, in this case it was not necessary as the request for information was clear.

Consideration

8. I have discussed this case with the relevant official in PRU and have agreed how best to take it forward. PRU will start at the top of the list of grants made to ACPO and, if time permits, provide the requested information for that first entry. When calculating the cost limit, PRU should be mindful that they can include the time taken to locate and retrieve the information and also the time taken to extract any information to be released, but not the time taken to decide if any information is exempt. If further time is available, PRU will then proceed to the second entry and so on. The request will be completed within 20 working days starting on 15 January and he should therefore receive a reply by 11 February.

Conclusion

9. It is unfortunate that Mr Sittampalam's request was not treated as a valid request and we should apologise for this. However, I am pleased that we have been able to agree a way forward with PRU which I hope meets Mr Sittampalam's requirements.

Steve Kirk
Information Access Team

January 2010