



# Home Office

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Andrew Watson  
[request-24914-77d80f9f@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-24914-77d80f9f@whatdotheyknow.com)

23 April 2010

Ref: CR 13889

Dear Mr Watson

## **Freedom of Information request (our ref. 13889): internal review**

Thank you for your e-mail of 18 March, in which you asked for an internal review of our response to your Freedom of Information (FoI) request about procedures for handling UK identity cards handed in as lost property.

I have now completed the review. I have examined all the relevant papers, including the information that was withheld from you, and have consulted the policy unit which provided the original response. I have considered whether the correct procedures were followed and assessed the reasons why information was withheld from you. I confirm that I was not involved in the initial handling of your request.

My findings are set out in the attached report. My main conclusion is that the original response to the second question was correct, although we were at fault in not replying within the time limit. The response to your first question provided you with information you had not requested, and failed to answer your question.

Manchester Police have not yet been issued with any guidance on how to handle ID cards which are handed in as lost property. IPS should have stated that explicitly, rather than simply stating that guidance is in preparation.

This completes the internal review process by the Home Office. If you remain dissatisfied with the response to your FoI 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

Diana Pottinger  
**Information Access Team**

Internal review of response to request under the Freedom of Information (Fol) Act 2000 by Andrew Watson (reference [13889])

**Responding Unit: Identity and Passport Service (IPS)**

**Chronology**

Original Fol request: 26 January 2010

Acknowledgement: 2 February 2010

IPS response: 12 March 2010

Request for internal review: 18 March 2010

**Subject of request**

Mr Watson asked:

1. What guidance the Home Office has given Manchester area police forces for handling a UK identity card that is handed in as lost property.
2. What procedure the Home Office has put in place for handling a UK identity card that is returned to you as lost property.

**The response by IPS**

In answer to question 1 IPS informed Mr Watson that:

- Identity cards issued under the Identity Cards Act 2006 provide information on the reverse of the card as to what to do in the event that a lost card is found by a third party.
- Guidance on the security features of the card has been made widely available, including to the police. The Identity and Passport Service (IPS) is continuing to work on handling guidance, using experience of the early stages of the roll-out, which will be issued to all police authorities in due course.

In answer to question 2 IPS informed Mr Watson that cards returned to IPS by a third party will be cancelled and securely destroyed.

## **Mr Watson's request for an internal review**

Watson said that the response failed to answer question 1 adequately. He was satisfied with the answer to question 2.

## **Procedural issues**

The request was acknowledged, and the applicant was provided with a date by which he should expect a response. The response was not issued within 20 working days. No qualified exemptions were being considered, so it was not possible to issue a PIT extension, consequently s 10 of the FOI Act was breached.

## **Consideration of the response**

The response to the second question correctly informed Mr Watson that ID cards found by a third party are securely destroyed, and Mr Watson is content with that answer. However, Mr Watson has complained that question 1 was not answered adequately. The response provided Mr Watson with information he had not requested, on the general subject of ID cards, and failed to answer the question. IPS informed Mr Watson that the reverse of the ID cards contains instructions for what to do in the event that a lost card is found by a third party, and that handling guidance for police forces was currently under preparation.

No guidance on what to do with ID cards handed in as lost property has as yet been given to the Manchester area police force. Although there was a possibility that this fact might have been deduced from the information supplied, it was not explicitly stated, so Section 1(1)(a) was not complied with for question 1. This is the part of the Act which requires public authorities to say whether or not they hold the requested information.

I have reminded IPS that they should ensure that they answer the specific question posed by the applicant, rather than merely supplying general information about the subject of the request.

## **Conclusion**

- The response was partially correct - one of the two questions was answered adequately
- Section 10(1) was not complied with – the response was 12 working days late.
- Section 1(1)(a) was partly complied with

**Information Access Team**

**Home Office**

**19 April 2010**

