



# Home Office

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[Request-8363-65188d7f@whatdotheyknow.com](#)

Mr Paul Perrin

Our Ref 11438  
Your Ref

Date 4 June 2009

Dear Mr Perrin

When I wrote to you on 17 April acknowledging receipt of your request for a review of the handling of your request for information about iris imaging, I said I had been asked to carry out that review. The purpose of this letter is to let you know the outcome of that review.

You were sent a letter on 23 March advising you that the reply would be delayed and that the target date for sending you a reply had been extended from 23 March until 8 April. You were told that it was necessary for the replying unit to consider if information held relevant to your request should be withheld under section 35(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Although section 10(3) allows us to do this, where necessary in order to consider the public interest, I agree that it was inappropriate to send you this letter as in fact the Home Office held no information relevant to your request. I have highlighted that this was not an acceptable extension of deadline under the Act to the Head of Unit where the request was handled and I apologise for this error.

As a result of this section 10(1) was breached as the request was not answered within 20 working days. Our records have been amended to show that this case was answered late, as opposed to within a reasonable extended period as permitted by section 10(3).

In your request for a review of the handling of your request for information, you said that you do not receive replies to your requests until the target date is due. As you are aware, the FOI Act requires that public authorities reply to requests for information within 20 working days from receipt with some exceptions, for example if it is necessary to consider withholding information held. I can assure you that the Home Office works hard to reply to as many requests as possible within target and that there is no question of any cases being 'sat on' as you suggest. As I am sure you will appreciate, the Home Office receives a great many FOI requests, which must be dealt with in order to ensure that as many as possible are answered on time. This, coupled with policy officials' other work, means that although we try to answer requests as quickly as possible it is not always possible to answer them earlier in the 20 day period.

If you are not satisfied with this response you have a further right of complaint to the Information Commissioner who can be contacted at the following address:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmore  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

[www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Kirk', written in a cursive style.

Steve Kirk