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29 August 2014

**Ref: CR32457**

Dear Mr/Ms Hidri

Thank you for your email of 30 July, in which you requested information relating to the department's guidance on biometric data. Your request is being handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We are considering your request. Although the Act carries a presumption in favour of disclosure, it provides exemptions which may be used to withhold information in specified circumstances. Some of these exemptions, referred to as 'qualified exemptions', are subject to a public interest test. This test is used to balance the public interest in disclosure against the public interest in favour of withholding the information. The Act allows us to exceed the 20 working day response target where we need to consider the public interest test fully.

The information which you have requested is being considered under the exemptions at Section 35 (Formulation of government policy), of the Act. This is a qualified exemption and to consider the public interest test fully we need to extend the 20 working day response period. We now aim to let you have a full response by 26 September 2014.

Yours sincerely

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