



Border Force

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Sumsi Timonda  
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Reference 56603

Date: 7 February 2020

Dear Sumsi Timonda

## **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

Thank you for your e-mail of 22 November, in which you ask for information on the Border Force usage of API data. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I wrote to you on 23 December to inform you that additional time was being taken to consider the public interest test. I am sorry for the delay in replying.

Your information request and the Border Force response are set out below.

**My previous request (55668) about API data was refused citing exemptions in the FOIA. This request, which I have divided into two parts, is about a different aspect of API collection. I hope disclosure is not exempt.**

**1) After five years, API data is moved from the Semaphore system to a separate storage area.**

**---a. How many records exist in this separate storage area as of November 2019?**

**---b. From what date is the oldest record in this separate storage area as of November 2019?**

We do not have a separate storage system.

**---c. Is data automatically deleted after five (and 10) years or does it have to be manually purged?**

API data is held for 10 years. We are unable to provide information on the deletion process as there is a Home Office moratorium preventing the destruction of Information.

**2) What is the procedure for in-country and overseas immigration caseworkers—including entry clearance officers—to obtain applicants' travel history data (from before the exit checks system was introduced in 2015) from a Semaphore b) Separate storage area? What checks are in place to ensure that caseworkers only have access to API data relevant to the case they are dealing with? Can ECOs access travel history data about British and EEA citizens?**

Searches of travel history made by case workers is on a controlled and limited basis. The department ensures the security of personal information by having systems and policies in place to limit access to only those records which match with suspected immigration offenders. Case workers who access personal information have appropriate security clearance and their activity is subject to audit and review. For more information on how we protect your personal information, please refer to the following information on the gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-information-use-in-borders-immigration-and-citizenship>

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to [foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk), quoting reference 56603. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request would be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you were to remain dissatisfied after an internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the FOIA.

Yours sincerely

H Reid  
Border Force - Information Rights Team