

Mr Christopher J Gillon

Web www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

Date 09/07/10

Ref 15219

Dear Mr Christopher J Gillon,

Thank you for your email. This falls to be dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I have listed your questions for reference.

I wish for the Agency to supply to me the statistics of how many time computers and how many times from each computer visitations have been made to any British National Party website also can you give a statistical counting of how many employees are registered activists or members of The British National Party.

The UK Border Agency (UKBA) does not centrally hold the information you have requested. Although UKBA holds the raw data of web addresses visited, it would be necessary to run a report to retrieve the data from the system. To generate a month's worth of data would take a system one night, and there are three systems. The data produced would need to be searched manually for specific BNP website addresses.

However, under the Act, we are not obliged to create information in order to respond to requests for information. Moreover, as part of the Home Office, UKBA is not obliged under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to comply with any information request where the estimated costs involved in supplying the information exceed the £600 cost limit. I regret that we cannot supply you with the information that you have asked for, as to comply with your request would exceed this cost limit. This limit applies to all central Government Departments and is based on work being carried out by one member of staff at a rate of £25 per hour, which equates to 3½ days work per request. The costs involved include locating and retrieving information you requested, and preparing our response to you. They do not include considering whether any information is exempt from disclosure, overheads such as heating or lighting, or disbursements such as photocopying or postage.

Your request would at present be too costly to answer because of the amount of raw data that would need to be searched. However, if you were to refine your request further so that it falls under the £600 cost limit, we will be pleased to consider it further. Although, on this occasion I am unable to suggest how you could refine your request.

Should you wish to refine your request, so that we can provide you with answers to your questions within the £600 cost limit, please write back to me at the above address.

I should also point out that if you were to break your original request down into a series of smaller applications, we might, depending on the circumstances of the case, decline to answer if the aggregated cost of complying would exceed £600.

You should also bear in mind that even if any new request were to fall below the £600 cost limit, some information which we hold on this matter which you have requested may fall to be withheld under the terms of a number of the substantive exemptions contained in Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. These exemptions could also make it necessary for us to extend the period for responding beyond the usual 20 working day target if they involve having to consider the public interest balancing test.

Regarding your question on whether any members of UKBA are members or registered activists of the BNP. Staff are not required to provide information about their political allegiance and therefore no data is available.

Finally, in response to your additional question regarding the number of computers I can confirm that there are 22,790 workstations.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the UK Border Agency sending a substantive reply to your original request and should be addressed to:

Information Access Team
Home Office
Ground Floor, Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
e-mail: FOIRequests@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

During the independent review the department's handling of your information request will be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. Should you remain dissatisfied after this internal review, you will have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Feakins,
Freedom of information team