

Home Office

By email only.

02 February 2017

Dear [REDACTED]/Simon

I write further to your letter dated 28 October.

Thank you for the information which you provided and the explanations relating to the snapshot requested as at 30 September 2016, along with the new process and internal guidance papers on request handling.

We note the high volumes of request that the Home Office has to deal with and the sensitive nature of some of these requests.

I had delayed contacting you sooner in the light of your comments regarding updating your procedures and being in the final stages of clearance for a batch of outstanding requests over 40 working days old, the nature of some of those requests and the expectation of being able to clear the out-of-time cases by the end of December.

In addition, given the Christmas holiday period it made sense to allow some additional time before seeking an update on those cases. Therefore, as we are now just into February, I would appreciate it if you could update me in relation, in particular, to the current situation regarding cases over 40 working days old as at the 31 January 2017. If another cut-off date is more compatible with providing this information then that is fine.

I note your comments regarding the 90% target referred to in my letter. I can now advise that the Cabinet Office has confirmed it incorrectly included this figure in the quarterly statistics (Q1 and Q2 2016) as a "government target"; it is in fact CO's own internal target and they have now removed this reference from the statistics. However, you may be aware that Elizabeth Denham is reviewing the ICO's current 85% target which is one of our triggers for considering if monitoring is appropriate.

On that point, I can also advise you that the Home Office has been recommended for formal monitoring, this was based upon identifying that the ICO closed over 20, section 50, Home Office cases involving delay, in the six months to 31 December 2017, and on the Q3 (Cabinet Office statistics 2016) performance slipping to 81%. I have suggested deferring that decision pending our current engagement, so it would be useful to know how Q4 is looking.

If you have any queries regarding the above please feel free to email or contact me on the number below. Additionally, I am aware you are meeting with my colleagues Anne Russell and Steven Dickinson next Wednesday, 8 February, so equally feel free to raise any queries with them.

Yours sincerely

Gerrard Tracey
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Information Commissioner's Office
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