



HM Courts & Tribunals Service

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Mr David Manley
By Email: [request-79417-
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<http://www.justice.gov.uk>

Our ref: 71391

Date: 7 September 2012

Freedom of Information Request

Dear Mr Manley

Thank you for your email of 16 August 2012, in which you confirmed that you had not received a response from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to your request submitted on 8 July 2011 under the Freedom of Information Act. In your request of 8 July, you asked for the following information from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ):

- 1) Requirements for the management and retention of emails and documents submitted to county court case management teams using e-filing systems?*
- 2) Requirements for the management of correspondence with customers (e.g. claimants, defendants etc.) and members of the public by case management sections, in particular requirements to respond within specified periods*
- 3) Requirements for the management of papers submitted by members of the public by hand to the court, in particular (but not limited to), requirements to provide receipts, logging of documents in case files , etc.*
- 4) Code of conduct for contact with the general public in HM courts either in person (i.e. at the court), or by telephone or email.*

I can confirm that your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

In the first instance, please accept our apologies for the length of time it has taken to action your request. I have thoroughly investigated the reasons for the delay in responding to your request. As I have mention in my earlier email correspondence, the delay is due to procedural oversight as the responsible officer to whom the request was sent had since left the department. We hope the delay has not caused you too much inconvenience.

I can confirm that the department holds information that you have asked for, and I am pleased to provide you with the following documents and answers to your request.

Documents enclosed:

HMCTS County Court Record Retention and Disposition Schedule (RRDS)
HMCTS Customer Service Standards

Question 1: Requirements for the management and retention of emails and documents submitted to county court case management teams using e-filing systems?

Answer: Courts do not have the facilities to operate an e-filing system. However, correspondence received via email relating to a specific claim will have a record of its receipt logged onto the court's case management computer system, be printed and retained on the court file in line with HMCTS County court record retention and disposition schedule (please see attached RRDS). Once the email has been printed, it is no longer stored.

Question 2: Requirements for the management of correspondence with customers (e.g. claimants, defendants etc.) and members of the public by case management sections, in particular requirements to respond within specified periods

Answer: HMCTS aims to respond to all correspondence within 10 working days of receipt. Any correspondence received that relates to a specific claim will have a record of its receipt logged onto the court's case management computer system and placed on the relevant file to be retained in line with HMCTS' record and retention schedule. Correspondence that is not case specific is retained for 1 year from the date of filing.

Question 3: Requirements for the management of papers submitted by members of the public by hand to the court, in particular (but not limited to), requirements to provide receipts, logging of documents in case files, etc.

Answer: The requirements for staff when dealing with papers submitted at the public counter is that unless a court fee is attached a receipt is not provided. Any document submitted to the court, regardless of the method it was received, is date stamped. Any document received at the public counter in addition to being date stamped has a record of its receipt logged onto the court's case management computer system (including the date it was received) and is retained in line with HMCTS record retention and disposition schedule.

Question 4: Code of conduct for contact with the general public in HM courts either in person (i.e. at the court), or by telephone or email.

Answer: I have attached our Customer Service Standards document. It sets out in detail our customer service standards and is displayed in all courts.

You can also find more information by reading the full text of the Act (available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents>) and further guidance <http://www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/freedom-of-information.htm>.

You have the right to appeal our decision if you think it is incorrect. Details can be found in the 'How to Appeal' section attached at the end of this letter.

Disclosure Log

You can also view information that the Ministry of Justice has disclosed in response to previous Freedom of Information requests. Responses are anonymised and published on our on-line disclosure log which can be found on the MoJ website: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/information-access-rights/foi-requests/latest-moj-disclosure-log>

The published information is categorised by subject area and in alphabetical order.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anisul Haque', enclosed within a circular stamp or seal.

Anisul Haque
Complaints, Correspondence and Litigation Assistant

How to Appeal

Internal Review

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to an internal review. The handling of your request will be looked at by someone who was not responsible for the original case, and they will make a decision as to whether we answered your request correctly.

If you would like to request a review, please write or send an email to the Data Access and Compliance Unit within two months of the date of this letter, at the following address:

Data Access and Compliance Unit (10.34),
Information & Communications Directorate,
Ministry of Justice,
102 Petty France,
London
SW1H 9AJ

E-mail: data.access@justice.gsi.gov.uk

Information Commissioner's Office

If you remain dissatisfied after an internal review decision, you have the right to apply to the Information Commissioner's Office. The Commissioner is an independent regulator who has the power to direct us to respond to your request differently, if he considers that we have handled it incorrectly.

You can contact the Information Commissioner's Office at the following address:

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

Internet address: https://www.ico.gov.uk/Global/contact_us.aspx