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FOI Reference: 23293/1616

Email:
request-120635-0233c4a4@whatdotheyknow.com

28 August 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

I am sorry to hear you were dissatisfied with our previous response. Please see the following information which hopefully now meets your requirements. I apologise for the delay in my response.

You requested the following information:

As of 29th June 2012, how many FLR(M) applications are being processed (i.e. they have been received by UKBA but not yet determined)?
What is the average current waiting time for these applications?
What is the average processing time for completed applications in 2011, and in 2012?

It is not possible to retrospectively get a snapshot of applications we were processing on 29 June. When we received your Freedom of Information request (on 29 July) we ran a report that showed we held 3,644 FLR (M) applications for processing.

- (1) The figure quoted is management information which has been subject to internal quality checks.
- (2) Data relates to main applicants only.

The average processing time for applications in 2011, was 73 calendar days. The average processing time for application completed between January and March 2012, was 119 calendar days.

- (1) The figure quoted is management information which has been subject to internal quality checks.
- (2) Data relates to main applicant only.

- (3) Processing time based on the average number of days between the case creation and decision despatched date.

How many personnel are currently working on FLR(M) applications (i.e caseworkers)? If people are not dedicated to this type of visa, please tell me how this work is structured (e.g. how the teams are structured and what other type of visas or other work they do) and please provide an FTE figure or how much caseworker time is spend on FLR (M) specifically. Please also provide equivalent figures for April 2011.

At present there are around 60 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees within Family Casework who deal with these cases. These caseworkers deal with a variety of applications including those made under Article 8, Outside the Rules, Transfer of Conditions, replacement Biometric Cards and Domestic Workers. Data for April 2011 is not available because teams were structured differently and had different responsibilities depending on the business needs at that time.

How much staff resource at UKBA is and has been dedicated to processing visas relating to the Olympics@ Have people been relocated to this work from other areas? Has the Olympics caused delays in the processing times for other visas? I would like to see any planning estimates made of this.

The UKBA plans its staffing requirements and deployment overseas based on overall forecasts of likely visa demand. Our forecasts take into account a variety of factors that can cause demand to fluctuate including seasonality, policy changes, the global and regional economic/political situation, etc.

We recruited an additional 151 temporary entry clearance staff to ensure we continued to meet customer service standards over the busy summer period, which would include visitor visa applications for people coming to see the Olympics. We recruited 134 such staff in the previous year. In the first half of this year we met our service standards of processing 90% all non-settlement visa applications within 15 working days.

We do not distinguish general Olympic/Paralympic visitors (e.g. spectators, etc) from other visit visa applicants. Games Family Members with full accreditation are exempt from visa requirements. The only visa applications that we can identify as being specifically related to the Olympics/Paralympics are those for the Olympic/Paralympic "Family" visa. These represent less than 0.2% of our annual visa demand and will have been absorbed within our business as usual, with no impact on processing times.

You questioned the timescales that we work to under FOI. The Information Commissioner's Awareness Guidance II – Time for Compliance states that the 20 working clocks starts:

- The day after the public authority receives the request. According to section 10(1) the time limit for compliance is the twentieth working day **following the date of receipt.**

or

- **The day the authority receives further information** it reasonably requires in order to identify and locate the information requested; section 1(3).

We do endeavor to answer all FOI requests as quickly as possible. In this case our previous response was seeking further information.

I hope this is of help to you. 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 the address below, quoting reference 23293. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

Information Access Team
Home Office
Ground Floor,
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

email: info.access@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

As part of any internal review our handling of your information request will be reassessed by staff not involved in providing you with this response. If you remain dissatisfied after this internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Yours faithfully

Sandra Birkinshaw