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Hari Patil

FOI Reference: 22674/1575

Email: request-115289-  
596980fa@whatdotheyknow.com

31 May 2012

Dear Mr Patil

Thank you for your enquiry of 2 May where you requested information on Tier 1 (General) switching applications received between 1st January and 6th April 2011. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please see the requested information below in response to your questions.

**1. In how many cases has the UKBA contacted HMRC in relation to the tax information about the applicant?**

**3. What was the shortest and the longest HMRC has taken to respond to these requests?**

In order to provide the requested information, we would need to undertake a manual case by a case search of records which would exceed the cost threshold.

The UK Border Agency is not obliged to comply with any information request where the prescribed cost of supplying you with the information exceeds £600. The £600 cost limit applies to all central government departments and is based on work being carried out at a rate of £125 per hour, which equates to 3.5 days work per request. Prescribed costs include those which cover the cost of locating and retrieving information 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.

We have estimated that to gather and collate the information you have requested would exceed the £600 cost threshold.

**2. What is the expected turn around time for these requests?**

The service standard agreement with HMRC states that responses should be received within 4 weeks.

**4. Are any of these requests still waiting to be responded to? If yes - how many?**

We have no outstanding HMRC verification requests from January to April 2011.

**5. How long will the UKBA/caseworker wait for a response from HMRC before making a decision on the application?**

We allow an initial period of 4 weeks for a response. If a response is not received in this time, we will send a chase request. This is rare and we have never had to send more than 2 chasers for a verification request from HMRC.

**6. Does UKBA send reminders to HMRC in case a response is not received within the expected time?**

Please see above response.

**7. What happens if the HMRC does not respond at all in spite of repetitive reminders?**

This has never been the case.

**8. Is it right for UKBA to make the applicants wait for years because a third party has not responded to their requests?**

The Tier 1 team have not had to wait longer than 3 months for a response to a verification request from HMRC.

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 22674. 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,  
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e-mail: [info.access@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info.access@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request will be reassessed by staff who were 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 sincerely

Sandra Birkinshaw