



Home Office  
Commercial Directorate

Hugh O'Boyle  
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Commercial Directorate  
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[www.gov.uk/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/home-office)

18 March 2020

Dear Mr O'Boyle

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST 57868**

Thank you for your e-mail of 19 February 2020, in which you ask for information on Home Office arrangements with Sopra Steria to provide services for UKVCAS. Your full request is shown at Annex A. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

We are considering your request. Although the FOIA carries a presumption in favour of disclosure, it provides exemptions which may be used to withhold information in specified circumstances. Some of these exemptions, referred to as 'qualified' exemptions, are subject to a public interest test. This test is used to balance the public interest in disclosure against the public interest in favour of withholding the information. The FOIA allows us to exceed the 20 working day response target where we need to consider the public interest test fully.

The information which you have requested is being considered under the exemption in section s43(2) of the FOIA, which relates to commercial interests. This is a qualified exemption and to consider the public interest test fully we need to extend the 20 working day response period. We now aim to let you have a full response by 17 April 2020.

Yours sincerely

**A FEHELEY**  
**HO COMMERCIAL**

E FOIRequests@homeoffice.gov.uk

## Annex A

From: Hugh O'Boyle  
Sent: 19 February 2020 17:44  
To: FOI Requests  
Subject: Freedom of Information request - Partnership with Sopra Steria for UKVCAS services

Dear Home Office,

The Home Office entered into a partnership with Sopra Steria to provide services for UKVCAS.

Please provide the following in PDF or digital format, together with all other relevant documents highlighting the nature of this agreement:

- the contract/ agreement signed by the Home Office and Sopra Steria
- any changes which may have been made to this agreement since it was signed
- all complaints made to Sopra Steria/ the Home Office by its service-users
- any fines or penalties imposed on Sopra Steria
- agreed accountability mechanisms
- any information pertaining to UKVCAS services for new refugees, including documents or agreements which demonstrate that Sopra Steria must not charge them fees
- all other relevant information

I would also like to know: why is Sopra Steria charging refugees for biometric services? Who is accountable when Sopra Steria (incorrectly) insist that they pay? If payment is made, who is responsible for ensuring that money is returned to the refugee?

Yours faithfully,

Hugh O'Boyle

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Please use this email address for all replies to this request:  
request-648138-34ab78e0@whatdotheyknow.com