

Stuart Harrison
request-92106-b894c95e@whatdotheyknow.com

25th November 2011

Dear Mr Harrison

Thank you for your e-mail of 3 November 2011 in which you asked for information about the 'Policy of responding to emails via Microsoft Word document. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am able to disclose only that information, which is held by the Home Office. This is set out in the enclosed Annex.

I hope that this information meets your requirements. I would like to assure you that we have provided you with all relevant information that the Home Office holds.

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 20554. 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
e-mail: FOIRequests@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

Ian Goswell
Communication Directorate

Annex

1. Why and when this policy was introduced.

The Home Office introduced an electronic correspondence tracking system in January 2003. This system was designed to enable the Department to track, store and answer correspondence. Microsoft Word was part of the package. At that time, the system was deemed to be the most effective technical solution on the grounds of cost and electronic storage.

2. What consideration has been given to people who do not have Microsoft Word installed on their computers.

A reply will be sent in a different format, for example in an email or in hard copy, where a correspondence requests that.

3. Please include all correspondence relating to this matter, both internal and external with your response.

We do not hold any documentation relating to either of the points raised.