



Home Office

Shared Services
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Clive Waterman

request-239855-
047aeb7e@whatdotheyknow.com

23 March 2016

Dear Mr Waterman,

Home Office Reference CR33552

Further to the Decision Notice issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) on 17 February, reference FS50574981, I am now able to provide a further response to part 4 of your request of 18 November 2014, Annex, with regard to the number of days it took UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to provide a full response to the subject access requests (SAR) made to them in the period requested; i.e. October 2013 to September 2014.

Regrettably a list of the SAR cases that were identified as not being completed within the legal requirement of 40 days was not retained as a separate document to create a snapshot of the cases that remained open at the time of the response to your request. As such, I have not been able to identify which cases should be examined to show the number of days greater than 40 it took to complete the SAR. In order to provide the final information for the number of days it took to complete each SAR received in the period we would need to examine over 3300 SARs in order to identify the 167 which we confirmed were completed outside of the legal deadline. A check of any cases received in the period under consideration has confirmed that there are no cases that continue to be incomplete.

Although your request listed the internal SAR training material and SAR guidance material as different items, in parts 7 and 8, I can confirm that there is only one document issued by UKVI re the handling of subject access requests. I am aware that you will have seen a large amount of the information in previous responses though it was presented in a different form and did not include the detailed processes for different staff levels. Please note that the guidance provided to staff at the time of your request often refers to UKBA, the previous name for that part of the Home Office. Additionally it is referred to by the previous business unit name as the Data Protection Unit (DPU), rather than the name, Subject Access Request Unit (SARU) which is how it is now known.

The document itself is 100 pages and, as such, the electronic form is too large to send in one email as the Home Office I.T. system places restrictions on the number of megabytes

that can be sent out in one message. For ease of distribution I have placed the whole document on a CD and am happy to send this to you once I am in receipt of a postal address.

Unfortunately the redaction software that the Home Office use marks any shaded areas, or areas filled with a solid colour, that are included in a document being redacted as black or makes the area so faint the image cannot be seen in any detail. In order to avoid large sections of the document appearing as black, or not being provided at all, I copied any pages from the original document that had not been redacted and created a third form of the document to include both pages that had been redacted and those with no redactions. In doing so the format of some of the pages will not be consistent with previous pages, nor will the page numbering follow smoothly in all sections. However, I can assure you that all information, that you are entitled to, has been provided. The redactions cover the exemptions provided that were approved by the ICO, those being in section 36(2)(c) (prejudice to the effective conduct for public affairs) or section 40(2) (personal data) which is used to withhold the names of individuals where appropriate.

I can confirm there are no separate training slides for staff working in the specialist Subject Access Request Unit (SARU) which deals with all sars sent to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), UK Immigration and Enforcement (UKIE), and Border Force. Staff are provided with the Guide when they join the team and new staff work alongside more experienced team members while learning their roles. They are encouraged to ask for guidance whenever they have queries and will have their work quality assured on a regular basis.

I did try to contact you on Tuesday at the WhatDoTheyKnow email address you had provided during the case but the message was not able to go through as the specific contact address had been closed because there had been no correspondence about the case. I understand that WhatDoTheyKnow has now reopened the web address so look forward to hearing from you with a postal address so that I can send you the CD of the staff guidance in handling subject access requests.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alice Snelling', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alice Snelling
Information Rights Team

Original FOI Request

From: Clive Waterman [<mailto:request-239855-047aeb7e@whatdotheyknow.com>]
Sent: 18 November 2014 23:55
To: FOI Requests
Subject: Freedom of Information request - SAR Response times

Dear Home Office,

Please can you provide information relating to subject access requests (sar).

1. How many did the home office receive in the twelve months (oct 2013 - sept 2014)
2. How many were processed within the legal time limit
3. How many were not processed within the legal deadline.
4. Please provide a breakdown of how long applications took to process. 1 day. 2 day.... 40 days.
5. Noting that legally all of the applications from the period above should of been concluded by now. How many remain unanswered.
6. Of 5, please provide details of how long the cases have been open. And where possible the reason for failing to respond to the request.
7. Please provide internal sar training material.
8. Please provide internal sar guidance material.

Yours faithfully,

Clive Waterman

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