



Home Office

Detention and Escorting
Services
Immigration Enforcement
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By email:
[request-414387-
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4th July 2017

Dear Ms Morrish,

REF: FOI 44405

Thank you for your email dated 26th June in which you requested data in relation to people who have been detained under immigration detention. This has been handled as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). You have asked the following information:

“I am requesting details of immigrants currently being detained in the UK's 'immigration removal centres' (IRC) and prisons.

The information I need is as follows:

- 1. As of June 2017 (or the latest recent date), how many IRCs are in the UK?***
 - a) How many people are being detained in IRCs?***
 - b) How many immigrants are being held in prisons in the UK under Immigration Act powers?***
- 2. Of those being detained, I would like to know the following:***
 - a) how old are they?***
 - b) what is their gender?***
 - c) what is their country of origin?***
 - d) how many have sought asylum?***
- 3. How long is the average time spent in an IRC?”***

Currently there are 9 immigration removal centres in the UK, full details of these and short term holding facilities are available on the GOV.UK website at: <https://www.gov.uk/immigration-removal-centre>

The data you have requested forms part of the Home Office published data. We intend to publish 2017 quarter 2 detention figures, which will include those detained as at 30th June 2017, on 24th August 2017 on the Home Office website, as part of the Home Office publication scheme.

In light of our intention to publish this information, I have decided not to communicate this information to you pursuant to the exemption under section 22 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This allows us to exempt information if it is intended for future publication. The full exemption can be found at Annex A.

Information on persons detained solely under Immigration Act powers relating to the first quarter of 2017, including those detained as at 31st March 2017, is available in the detention tables of Immigration Statistics January to March 2017:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/615173/detention-jan-mar-2017-tables.ods and the associated text:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-january-to-march-2017/how-many-people-are-detained-or-returned> and available on the GOV.UK website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

The Home Office publishes length of detention figures in bands as average figures can be skewed by the small number of people detained for longer periods.

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 44405. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

Information Rights Team
Home Office
Third Floor, Peel 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

Detention and Escorting Services
Immigration Enforcement
Home Office

Annex A

Public interest test

The use of this exemption requires consideration of whether it is:

- Reasonable in all the circumstances not to produce the information until the intended publication date of 24th August 2017, and
- Whether in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption stated above outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

This is a two stage test but the central issue is whether in all the circumstances it is reasonable and in accordance with the public interest to require you to wait until August for publication.

We recognise there may be a public interest in producing this information for you now and that this may also weigh in favour of it being unreasonable to make you wait until August to see the publication. We have considered the following:

- It is important that the public have access to immigration statistics. Home Office staff are required to handle requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, not least to assure them that this legislation is being fully implemented.

But there are also public interest reasons for maintaining the exemption to the duty to communicate which weigh in favour of it being reasonable to require you to wait for publication until 24th August 2017. We have considered the following:

- Publication would undermine Home Office established pre-publication procedures, which includes internal consultation about the final statistics being established on the Home Office website, and also being able to use its staff resources effectively in a planned way so that reasonable publication timetables are not affected.

After balancing these conflicting arguments around the date of publication, we have concluded not only that it is reasonable to require you to wait for publication on 24th August 2017 but also that the balance of the public interests identified favours maintaining the exemption. This is not least because we believe that in this case the overall public interest lies in favour of ensuring that the Home Office is able to plan its publication of information in a managed and coherent way, and this would not be possible if immediate disclosure were made.