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Hari

FOI Reference: 22023/1542

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10 April 2012

Dear Hari

Thank you for your enquiry of 12 March where you have requested information regarding Tier 1 General initial application verification timelines. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please see the information below in response to your questions.

Questions 1 to 4

- 1. How many In-country Tier 1 General Initial applications were received between 1 February 2011 and 6 April 2011 ?*
- 2. How many of these were processed within 4 months of receiving the application.*
- 3. How many of these were decided before 31 December 2011.*
- 4. How many of these are still not decided?*

**Tier 1 General, Leave to Remain initial applications, main applicant only,
received between 1 February to 6 April 2011**

Total Cases			
Question 1	Question 2	Question 3	Question 4
7,758	7,396	263	73

Notes: All figures quoted are management information which has been subject to internal quality checks

Question 5

How many of these have been passed to the Verification team?

Applications may be passed to the International Liaison Unit (ILU) for verification and to the Regional Verification Team (RVT). Please see our website link below for more information on assessing English language.

246 applications were passed to the ILU for verification during this period.

32 applications were passed to the RVT.

<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/modernised/working/pbs/englishlanguage.pdf?view=Binary>.

Question 6

Of the Applications that are still not decided, what is the longest and shortest an application has been with the verification team?

None of the Tier 1 referrals handled by ILU are outstanding. The shortest timescale was 1 day; the longest timescale was 386 days.

None of the Tier 1 referrals handled by RVT are outstanding. The shortest timescale was 1 day; the longest timescale was 47 days.

Question 7 & 8

What is the expected turnaround time of the verification department?

What does the caseworker do if the verification team doesn't turn around in the expected turn around time?

Regarding referrals handled by ILU, overseas verification turnaround times are difficult to predict as there are different factors to consider with each referral dependent on the concerns of those considering cases. Please note there is no service level agreement in place for verifying overseas referrals. Such cases will take as long as they need to take for verification. We do however regularly review progress on each case.

The expected turnaround time for referrals to RVT is 5 working days on average in approximately 90% of referrals.

Question 9

As per the UKBA website, The contact centres cannot give an update about the progress of an application if the application has been submitted in the last 6 months. Why is it then that even when the application has been submitted more than 12 months ago, the contact centres are not able to give any useful information beyond the usual "Your application has not yet been decided. Please continue to wait". Everyone knows that the application has not yet been decided. That's why we call them to find out what happened. But they are simply not able to give any useful information. Why is this? How long is one supposed to wait?

In response to progress enquiries about applications submitted more than six months ago, contact centre staff are only able to confirm whether an application has been received and is still outstanding. Contact centre staff are not authorised to divulge

personal or case specific information, and timescales for the completion of individual applications cannot be foreseen.

Although contact centre staff have access to databases to check for progress on outstanding applications, they have no control over the decision making process or its timing. Decisions are the responsibility of casework staff and all applications are considered on merit. Some cases, particularly if they are complex, will take longer than others so outcomes and timescales cannot therefore be assessed or predicted by contact centre staff. The role of the UK Border Agency call handler is to check the system when an application has been outstanding for more than 6 months. This will show that the application is either in a queue awaiting allocation to a caseworker or that it has been allocated for consideration. The allocation of a case for consideration does not necessarily mean that a decision is imminent as further enquiries may be needed.

The figures quoted are not provided under National Statistics protocols and have been derived from local management information and are therefore provisional and subject to change.

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 22023. 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: 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

Daniela Walker