

## Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

### Decision notice

**Date:** 25 November 2014

**Public Authority:** Home Office  
**Address:** 2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

#### Decision (including any steps ordered)

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1. The complainant requested information relating to the processing of passport application forms sent to Durham.
2. The Home Office (HO) failed to respond to this request for information within 20 working days and the Commissioner's decision is that in doing so it breached section 10(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
3. As the Home Office has now responded to this request, the Commissioner does not require it to take any further steps.

#### Request and response

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4. On 11 June 2014, the complainant wrote to the HO making a request for information under the FOIA.

*"a) What are the normal hours of work for members of staff involved with the processing of Passport Application Forms sent to Durham?  
b) How many members of staff are usually employed with the processing of Passport Application Forms sent to Durham?  
c) At which point(s) in the last 12 months did HM Passport Office realise that the amount of Passport Application Forms it was receiving at Durham was exceeding the Human Resources currently available to meet the standard 3-week turnaround time?  
d) Has there been a point in the last 12 months that HM Passport Office realised that the amount of Passport Application Forms it was processing under the Fast Track and/or Premium service were*

*exceeding the Human Resources currently available to meet the respected turnaround time(s)?*

*e) At which point(s) in the last 12 months have the working hours for members of staff involved with the processing of Passport Application Forms sent to Durham been increased beyond their normal working hours, and for each time this has taken place what have their hours been increased from and to?*

*f) Who currently holds the authority to increase the normal hours of work for members of staff involved with the processing of Passport Application Forms sent to Durham?*

*g) At each point in the last 12 months that authorisation has been granted to increase the normal hours of work for members of staff involved with the processing of Passport Application Forms sent to Durham, who has specifically authorised each increase, how was the authorisation request transmitted, who received these transmissions and is it possible to receive a copy of each authorisation transmission sent?*

*h) What type of contract(s) do members of staff involved with the processing of Passport Application Forms sent to Durham currently work under?*

*i) What are the current 'Out of Hours' pay rates currently paid by HM Passport Office to members of staff involved with the processing of Passport Application Forms sent to Durham, and have these altered at all since it was noted that the amount of Passport Application Forms it was receiving at Durham was exceeding the Human Resources currently available to meet the standard 3-week turnaround time?*

*j) What methods has/is HM Passport Office used, currently using and planning to use to help combat the issue regarding the amount of Passport Application Forms it is receiving at Durham which are exceeding the Human Resources currently available to meet the standard 3-week turnaround time?*

*k) Could you please supply the figures for the amount of Passport Application Forms received over the last 3 years at Durham (and any other site that is specifically responsible for the processing of Passport Application Forms under the standard 3-week turnaround time), as well as the figures for how many were successfully processed within the standard 3-week turnaround time?*

*l) Could you please supply the figures for the amount of Passport Application Forms received over the last 3 years nationwide under the Fast Track and Premium services, as well as the figures for how many were successfully processed within the respective turnaround times?*

*m) Currently, how many sites does HM Passport Office operate from and in which cities would they be located?*

*n) Currently, what company does HM Passport Office use for Access Control across its different sites nationwide?"*

5. The HO acknowledged receipt of the request on the 14 June 2014. The complainant sent an email chasing a response to their request on 11 July 2014 and the HO responded to this on 19 July 2014 stating there was a delay in dealing with the request.
6. During the Commissioner's investigation HO provided a response to the complainant dated 14 November 2014.

### **Reasons for decision**

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7. Section 10(1) of the FOIA states that a public authority must respond to a request promptly and "*no later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt*".
8. In this case HO has breached section 10(1) by failing to respond to the request within 20 working days.

## Right of appeal

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9. Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from:

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)  
GRC & GRP Tribunals,  
PO Box 9300,  
LEICESTER,  
LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0300 1234504

Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: [GRC@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:GRC@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk)

Website: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber>

10. If you wish to appeal against a decision notice, you can obtain information on how to appeal along with the relevant forms from the Information Tribunal website.
11. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

**Signed .....**

**Jon Manners**  
**Group Manager**  
**Information Commissioner's Office**  
**Wycliffe House**  
**Water Lane**  
**Wilmslow**  
**Cheshire**  
**SK9 5AF**