



Home Office

Identity & Passport Service

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Reference: FOICR 23865/12

11 September 2012

Dear xxxxxxxxxxxx

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your e-mail of 13 August, in which you ask for information about the return of documents in support of passport applications. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am able to disclose the information set out in the enclosed Annex.

In keeping with the Freedom of Information Act, we assume that all information can be released to the public unless it is exempt. In line with normal practice we are therefore releasing the information which you requested via the Home Office website.

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 Identity and Passport Service 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 FOICR 23865/12. 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 members of 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

Xx Xxxxxx
Parliamentary & correspondence Management Team

Freedom of Information request from xxxxxxxx (reference 23855/12)

Information requested and the Identity and Passport Service (IPS) response is below.

Since the service began to date:

- 1. How many passport applicants requested and paid an additional fee for the secure return of their supporting documents;**

For period 01/01/2004 - 13/08/2012 we received £3,580,509 for 1,193,503 applications under the category 'Secure Delivery required'. In addition, IPS paid the secure delivery cost of £20,238 for 6,746 applications from people qualifying for free concessionary passports.

- 2. How many documents were returned to applicants via Secure Post?**

- 3. How many applicants received a refund for any documents that were not sent by Secure Post when this service had been originally been requested and paid for?**

Response to questions 2&3

From the 9 February 2004, IPS introduced the Secure Delivery of all valid British passports through our supplier Secure Mail Services (now DX Secure), in response to concerns about the large number of passports reported lost in the post. In November 2004, a recommendation was incorporated into our guidance notes for all customers to pay the £3.00 Secure Delivery fee, for the return of their passport application supporting documents.

This change was implemented to allow the customer a choice in terms of the security of their documents.

Provided in the table below is the number of complaints received from customers who paid for secure delivery but had their supporting documents returned by 2nd Class post, in error.

Also shown is the total amount of compensation paid to customers during each financial period since the introduction of secure delivery. The number of customers

who received compensation is unavailable – we are only able to provide total compensation amounts.

Financial Year	No. of Complaints Received	Total Compensation Paid
2004/05	86	£368.54
2005/06	272	£888.56
2006/07	193	£589.87
2007/08	263	£1,024.92
2008/09	231	£600.32
2009/10	238	£2,165.81
2010/11	129	£1,257.01
2011/12	91	£370.92
Total	1503	£7265.95

4. What happens to the funds when secure post service is paid for by applicants but not used, where a refund is not made to the applicant?

Where an applicant pays to have their documents returned by secure mail IPS will fulfil that request. On rare occasions the request can be missed and where this happens the applicant normally informs IPS and a refund is sent to the applicant. If the applicant does not inform IPS of this mistake then the money is inadvertently retained by IPS.

Date **11 September 2012**