

01 May 2024

REFERENCE: FOI\24\47

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your request for information dated 18th April 2024 and detailed below. Answers have been provided under each question.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives you two rights of access when you write to us asking for information. You have the right to know whether we hold recorded information falling in scope of your request, and you have the right to receive this recorded information subject to cost limit or exemption.

In relation to Access NI checks -

Please provide the number of applications rejected by AccessNI over the last 3 years by month with a breakdown of why they were rejected. (I am specifically interested in rejections where applicants have not forwarded documentation).

2021/2022												
	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22
ID Documents not received	163	221	298	210	239	276	309	241	318	204	296	293
Citizen asked to be rejected	14	20	18	7	15	2	7	4	3	16	12	15
2022/2023												
	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23
ID Documents not received	270	280	328	278	316	451	338	290	283	276	272	303
Citizen asked to be rejected	13	15	14	12	15	16	20	20	12	15	3	3
2023/2024												
	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24

ID Documents not received	243	330	298	314	337	312	323	315	267	268	333	310
Citizen asked to be rejected		7	13	11	6	19	12	6	7	12	8	12

- 1. Are there any plans to send reminders to applicants who have not submitted their documents within 7 days and allow for an extension to this period.**

AccessNI is currently working with our IT supplier to develop functionality that will facilitate the uploading of relevant identity documents as part of the application completion process. It is expected that this functionality will be available in the live environment (for Basic Citizen applications) in the summer of 2024. This will include the automated sending of reminders, via email, where identity documentation has not been received within 7 days and allowing a further 7 days before application is rejected. A further email will be issued on the 15th day advising the application has been rejected and a refund has been actioned.

- 2. Are there any plans to allow for the uploading of documentation during the initial application process instead of having to email them later.**

See answer to previous question.

- 3. Are there any plans to allow applicants who are rejected the ability to speak to a staff member who can explain why they have been rejected.**

There are two reasons why an application can be rejected:

1. Identity documentation has not been received by AccessNI; or
2. The applicant requests the application to be rejected due to having applied for the incorrect level of check.

Should an applicant wish to speak to a member of AccessNI they can call 0300 20 7888 and asked to be put through to AccessNI. Alternatively, a request for a call back can be emailed to ani@accessni.gov.uk via the call centre.

- 4. Are there any plans to amend the final screen an applicant sees during the application process which states in large letters with a green background “application completed” and then in normal size below states that ID documents should be emailed to AccessNI. The smaller text could easily be missed, especially on a mobile device.**

I refer to the answer to question 2, it will be clear that identity documentation will require to be uploaded onto the application. Whilst the final screen will be amended there will be no need to refer to emailing identity documentation to AccessNI with this new functionality.

5. What testing of the process was completed prior to roll out and can a copy of its findings be sent.

Testing was completed by both AccessNI's IT Supplier and AccessNI when this system was implemented in 2015. AccessNI are unable to provide a copy of testing plan undertaken in 2014/15. The process of emailing identity documentation was only tested at a 'light touch' level as it was seeking to use online functionality that already existed.

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If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. If you request an internal review, please do so in writing stating the reasons to the address above.

If following an internal review you were to remain dissatisfied you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner and ask the Commissioner to investigate whether the DOJ has complied with the terms of the FOIA. You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

The Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out.

Further details on the role of the Information Commissioner and the handling of appeals can be found at: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Records & Information Manager