

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 (SECTION 50)

DECISION NOTICE

Dated 8 December 2005

Name of Public Authority: Social Security Agency

Address of Public Authority: First Floor
Lighthouse Building
Gasworks Business Park
Belfast
BT7 2JB

Nature of Complaint

The Information Commissioner (the "Commissioner") has received a complaint which states that on 12 June 2005 the following information was requested from the Social Security Agency under section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "Act"):

SSA Internal Policy Guidelines on

- *Passing cases to Debt Management Unit including specifically all pre-conditions to be met before doing so*
- *Quality Control processes used within the Agency to record and confirm changes of address properly notified and to ensure that these are available to and used by all staff*
- *Quality Control processes used to ensure that outgoing mail has a deliverable address including post codes*

It is alleged that the Social Security Agency failed to respond to the Complainant's request within the statutory twenty working day period.

The Commissioner's Decision

Under section 50(1) of the Act, except where a complainant has failed to exhaust a local complaints procedure, or where the complaint is frivolous or vexatious, subject to undue delay, or has been withdrawn, the Commissioner is under a duty to consider whether the request for information has been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of Part I of the Act and to issue a Decision Notice to both the Complainant and the Public Authority.

The Commissioner's decision is as follows:

The Commissioner is satisfied that the Social Security Agency did not provide any response to the Complainant's request of 12 June 2005 until 20 July 2005, and the information requested was not provided until 3 August 2005. The Commissioner's decision in this case is that the Social Security Agency

Reference: FS50085364

has not dealt with the Complainant's request in accordance with the requirements of Part I of the Act in that it has failed to comply with section 10(1).

Section 10(1) of the Act states –

“... a public authority must comply with section 1(1) promptly and in any event not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt”.

Action Required

In view of the fact that the Social Security Agency responded to the complainant's request on 20 July 2005 the Information Commissioner does not require that any steps be taken by the Social Security Agency.

Right of Appeal

Either party has the right to appeal against this Decision Notice to the Information Tribunal (the “Tribunal”). Information about the appeals process can be obtained from:

Information Tribunal	Tel: 0845 6000 877
Arnhem House Support Centre	Fax: 0116 249 4253
PO Box 6987	Email: informationtribunal@dca.gsi.gov.uk
Leicester	
LE1 6ZX	

Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 days of the date on which this Decision Notice is served.

Dated the 8th day of December 2005

Signed:

Graham Smith
Deputy Commissioner
Information Commissioner' Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF