



**An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála**

Oifig na bPasanna, Teach Knockmaun, 42-47 Sráid an Mhóta Íochtarach,  
Baile Átha Cliath 2 D02 TN83

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**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

Passport Office, Knockmaun House, 42-47 Mount Street Lower, Dublin 2 D02 TN83

Our Ref: FOI/Req/2019/108

Mr. Kevin O'Neill  
Irish Examiner.

1 April, 2019

Dear Mr. O'Neill,

I refer to the request which you have made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2014 for access to records held by this Department, as follows:

**The content of all complaints made to/about the Passport Service from 1 January, 2018 to 1 March, 2019.**

**Details of data breaches from 1 January to 1 March 2019, including the nature of the breach and any action taken.**

I refer also to the acknowledgement of your request which was sent to you on 19 March 2019.

As agreed with you I am releasing a representative sample of complaints received by the Passport Office and a summary of data breaches. The records being released to you have only been edited to remove personal details of individuals in order to protect their identities.

There were 247 complaints received between 1 January 2018 and 1 March 2019. The total number of passport applications received from 1 January, 2018 to 1 March, 2019 was 1,008,089.

With regard to data breaches the Passport Service have reported a total of six data breaches to the Data Protection Commission from the period 1 January to 1 March 2019. The most common nature of data breach was the unauthorised disclosure of a passport to a third party by virtue of the passport being posted to the wrong address.

The Passport Service processes in excess of 800,000 applications per year. The Passport Service endeavours to safeguard the personal data of applicants and takes its responsibilities in this regard very seriously. We monitor closely our compliance rate; in 2018, just 0.006% of the total applications which were processed were subject to a suspected data breach. We continue to work towards lowering this figure further. Mitigating actions taken by the Passport Service include reporting all lost passports to Interpol for stop listing and issuing gratis replacement passports to affected parties.

Data protection training is a key element of the training programme provided by the Passport Service's dedicated training unit. All staff are aware of the implications of data protection legislation and their responsibilities. Staff are fully informed as to best practice in handling and safeguarding personal data in the workplace. Data protection awareness continues to be a core element of the induction training provided to all new Passport Service staff on commencement of employment.

The Passport Service has implemented a Clean Desk Policy which seeks to maintain and improve the security and confidentiality of all personal data held by the Passport Service, whilst also mitigating the likelihood of supporting documents or passports being sent to a third party in error.

#### Right of Appeal

Should you wish to appeal this decision, you may do so in writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 76-78 Harcourt Street, Dublin 2 or by email to [foi@dfa.ie](mailto:foi@dfa.ie). A fee applies for an appeal for access to non-personal information; the level of this fee has been set at €30. For methods of payment, please contact FOI Unit at [foi@dfa.ie](mailto:foi@dfa.ie), or 01-4082857.

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks (20 working days) from the date of this notification. However, the making of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this Department.

Yours sincerely,

  
Donal O'Driscoll  
Passport Service