

7th October 2020

BY EMAIL

Our Ref: FOI 1319

Dear [REDACTED],

Your request for information was received on 24th August 2020 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested with regards to Identity Verification.

Firstly, please accept my apologies for the delay in procuring this information on your behalf.

Please find this information below:

1) Please list the services that require users to verify their identity by sending in physical forms of documentation (e.g. a passport)?

- HSC Pension Service
- Family Practitioner Services - FPS Business and Services Improvement Team
- Family Practitioner Services - FPS Medical Registration / Access to Health team
- Recruitment Shared Services Centre

HSC Pension Service

1a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

The total number of pension processes that required users to verify their identity by physical form of identification in the 19/20 financial year was 3488.



This takes approximately 5 minutes per verification by an in-house Band 3 officer.
Therefore the cost to process is 3488 x £1.27 = £4429.76

1b) Are these verifications performed by a third party or conducted by an in-house team?

In-house

2) Please list the services that allow users to use a digital method for proving their identity; and name the methods used (e.g. Gov.UK Verify or other equivalent digital biometric identity method)?

None

2a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

N/A

Family Practitioner Services - FPS Business and Services Improvement Team

1a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

It is carried out by a mixture of Band 3 and Band 5 staff and utilising approx. 4 hours processing time for each application.

Number of identities checked 2019/20 – 40

Number of hours utilised to process – 160

Cost per hour - £17.03

Total Cost for processing identity checks - £2724.80

1b) Are these verifications performed by a third party or conducted by an in-house team?

In-house

2) Please list the services that allow users to use a digital method for proving their identity; and name the methods used (e.g. Gov.UK Verify or other equivalent digital biometric identity method)?

None

2a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

N/A

Family Practitioner Services - FPS Patient Registrations with a GP in NI

1a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

91,075 at a cost of £325k (however please note that this cost includes more than just a check and verification)

1b) Are these verifications performed by a third party or conducted by an in-house team?

In House

2) Please list the services that allow users to use a digital method for proving their identity; and name the methods used (e.g. Gov.UK Verify or other equivalent digital biometric identity method)?

Patient Registration with a GP in NI

- GRO
- Home Office
- Experian Patient Eligibility Assessment System

2a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

- GRO - 21,697
- Home Office - 337
- Experian Patient Eligibility Assessment System - 35,414

Total Cost of processing £13k

Recruitment Shared Services Centre

1a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

12123 (however please note that due to reporting constraints this is likely to be an underestimate and could be up to 15% higher than this)

In relation to the cost, this can be calculated by the number of hours utilised to process. Considering the related elements of the process including determination of ID checks required; issue of the conditional offer; opening, reviewing and logging the ID documents received and then assessing the documents presented it is likely that each ID check which goes smoothly could utilise 45 minutes per check which translates to approximately 9092 hours per annum. However many checks require follow up both to obtain the checks and to verify further elements. It should also be noted that for one organisation RSSC will ordinarily verify the original documents which can add a further element of time to the processing (this is currently suspended due to special arrangements due to the Covid19 Pandemic). Where the latter is the case this may add a further 15 minutes to each case processed for that organisation. Other organisations will normally do this at a local level and therefore this would be a cost carried by those organisations.

This activity is ordinarily processed at Band 3 level which carries an hourly cost of approximately £13.14 (this does not account for goods and services charges)

As such, the Total minimum cost for processing identity checks is approximately £9.85 per ID check at an annual cost of approximately £119,468.

1b) Are these verifications performed by a third party or conducted by an in-house team?

These are conducted by HSC Staff (either in the Recruitment Shared Service Centre or Local HR departments across the region)

2) Please list the services that allow users to use a digital method for proving their identity; and name the methods used (e.g. Gov.UK Verify or other equivalent digital biometric identity method)?

None

2a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

N/A

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to

Information Governance Manager,
2 Franklin Street,
Belfast,
BT2 8DQ

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

Website: www.ico.org.uk
Phone: 0303 123 1113
Email: casework@ico.org.uk
Post: Information Commissioner's Office
3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place
Belfast
BT7 2JB

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,

Karen Bailey

Karen Bailey
Acting Chief Executive