



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála

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

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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

Mr. Eoghan Murphy.

Ref: FOI/Req/2019/247

5th September, 2019.

Dear Mr. Murphy,

I refer to your recently submitted request for information, made under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2014, in which you requested the following:

- 1) **The total number of cases of suspected passport fraud that the department, or the Passport Office, investigated in (i) 2016, (ii) 2017, (iii) 2018 and (iv) this year.**
- 2) **The total number of cases of suspected passport fraud that the department, or the Passport Office, passed on to the gardaí for investigation in each of the above years.**
- 3) **The total number of passports that were cancelled because of suspected fraud in each of the above years.**
- 4) **A list of the most common types of passport fraud in each of the above years.**

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

I am the Deciding Officer in this case.

The Passport Service takes all types of fraud very seriously within the service, to this end the Passport Service has endeavoured to improve all aspects of detection to protect the integrity of the Irish Passport.

Since 2017 large resources have been invested in the Integrity Section of the Passport Service. This section has had an increase in staff numbers and new and improved systems have been put in place. A large investment in technology and structures has helped to improve our detecting and recording of instances of fraud. These resources along with new procedures introduced to the Passport Service has prevented fraud applications from being submitted and closing down avenues of access previously used by the fraudulent applicant.

All suspected attempts at fraud which are detected by the Passport Service or reported to the Integrity Section are evaluated on entering the section. At this point all reports are examined and some issues may be resolved by this examination while others need to be escalated and assigned to an investigator. Investigations are resolved in different time frames subject to the level of investigation required. Figures recording the instances of fraud will not correlate to the figure

reported to An Garda Síochána. This occurs due to cases of suspected fraud being resolved within the section while other matters may not have reached the threshold to permit them to be reported to An Garda Síochána. While each year there is a large amount of investigations and enquiries opened and carried out by the Integrity Section only those where breaches of the Passports Act, 2008 are established rather than suspected are reported to An Garda Síochána.

- 1) The total number of suspected cases of passport fraud that the Passport Service, investigated in (i) 2016, was 78, (ii) 2017, was 386, (iii) 2018 was 504 and (iv) up to the 30th of June 2019 was 240.
- 2) The total number of suspected cases of passport fraud that the Passport Service forwarded to An Garda Síochána for investigation in (i) 2016, was 3, (ii) 2017, was 102, (iii) 2018 was 97 and (iv) up to the 30th of June 2019 was 35.
- 3) The total number of passports that were cancelled because of suspected fraud by the Passport Service, in (i) 2016, was 76, (ii) 2017, was 82, (iii) 2018 was 130 and (iv) up to the 30th of June 2019 was 46.
- 4) Integrity Section does not categorise cases, as each attempt can have varying and unique features therefore it is not possible to identify one form of fraud over another.

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, D02 DX45 or by email to 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, 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 Office.