



Our Ref: FOI/Req/21/036

Mr. Ken Foxe

26 February 2021

Dear Mr. Foxe,

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 2018, 2019, and 2020.*
- 2) The total number of cases of suspected passport fraud that the department, of 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 or information note - if possible - 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 8 February 2021.

I am the Deciding Officer in this case. I have created a record in order to respond to your request for information. I have made a decision to grant this record.

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 have prevented fraudulent applications from being submitted, 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 are 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.

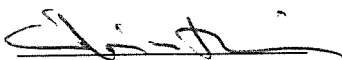
Having regard to your fourth query, for operational and security reasons and in order to continue to protect the integrity of the Irish passport, the Passport Service does not comment on such matters. As such, no record exists and I will not be commenting on the subject in the record that I have created.

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, 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.

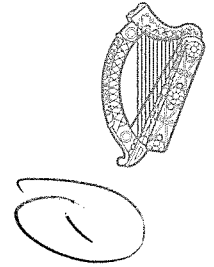
Yours sincerely,



Cillian Rossi
Passport Service

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SCHEDULE		
Record Description	Granted/Part-Granted/Refused	Section exempted under:
1. Reply to request for information.	Granted.	
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		



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The total number of cases of suspected passport fraud that the Department, or the Passport Service, investigated in 2018, 2019 and 2020:

2018	504
2019	1644
2020	1033

The total number of cases of suspected passport fraud that the Department, or the Passport Service, passed on to the Gardaí for investigation in 2018, 2019 and 2020:

2018	97
2019	67
2020	20

The total number of passports that were cancelled because of suspected fraud in 2018, 2019 and 2020:

2018	130
2019	77
2020	22