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[By Email]

05 May 2015

Our Ref: FOI4001

Freedom of Information : Right to know request

Thank you for your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act), for the following information:

"Could you please tell me what is the average authorisation time for financial advice firms going from being an appointed representative to becoming directly authorised? Can I please have it for the most recent timeframe which you have data for eg. Q4 2014, or 2014 as a whole. Could you also say, during the whole of 2014, what was the quickest and longest authorisation time for advice firms going from AR to DA?"

Could you also please tell me the average authorisation time for new financial advice firms? Can I please have it for the most recent timeframe which you have data for eg. Q4 2014 or 2014 as a whole."

Your request has now been considered and I can confirm that we hold the information you have requested.

In relation to your request we have defined "Financial Advice Firms" as Personal Investment Firms (PIF) and Retail Intermediaries (RI).

Firms going from being appointed representatives to directly authorised

In relation to the first part of the request, I can confirm that of the 171 Applications which we have received for PIF & RI Firms in 2014 who were Appointed Representatives and wanted to be directly authorised, 170 have been determined. The average determination time* is 13.26 weeks, with the quickest time to decision made in 2.2 weeks and the longest time to decision made in 33 weeks.

New financial advice firms

In relation to the second part of the request, I can confirm that of the 302 PIF & RI Applications received for direct authorisation in 2014 (excluding Firms who were Appointed Representatives and wanted to be directly authorised), 286 have been

determined. The average determination time* is 13.96 weeks, with the quickest time to decision made in 3 days and the longest time to decision made in 35.4 weeks.

We continually seek to improve our processes to reduce average determination times whilst maintaining a robust gateway. However, it is important to note that the average processing time is influenced by a variety of factors, including:

- The complexity of the application
- The completeness and quality of the information provided by the applicant; and
- The time elapsed while we wait for the applicant to send us any necessary information not provided in the original application.

Therefore it is in the interests of applicants to provide all required information, to a high standard, and respond promptly to any requests for information during the assessment process.

*'determination time' is the earlier of when the application is made 'subject to' or authorised. 'Subject to' is a point in time where the FCA makes a decision to authorise, but with conditions to be met before authorisation can be confirmed e.g. evidence of capital, professional indemnity insurance, deregistration from a network in the case of existing Appointed Representatives. The time between 'subject to' and authorised is not included in the above information because it is totally outside the FCA's control.

Yours sincerely

Information Access Team