

1. Telephone Calls

Telephone calls have increased over the past few months. The majority of callers are enquiring about their application, but there has recently been an increase in the volume of prospective applicants enquiring about grandparenting. Call answer rates have remained constant throughout the period. During May International received more telephone calls than UK this breaks an all time record for the Teams. The main focus and priority for International remains processing the applications, ensuring this reduces the volume of phone calls.

2. New Applications - processing times

The volume of grandparenting applications has been increasing month-on-month since March; the majority have been chiropody/podiatry applicants as can be seen in the report new applications. The Team have continued to work on processing applications and have recently completed a mailmerge to 1,600 applicants whose forms are in the system explaining that we have received their documentation. This exercise will be completed once the grandparenting window closes 8th July 2005.

3. Flexible Working

The Teams have been working hard on the proposal of flexible working (which is effectively an annualised hours solution) over the past two months with a working party including Management and Registration Officers discussing the options. All Registration Officers completed surveys and have been issued with schedules of work based on their survey responses. The proposal means that those who opt into the proposal will work longer hours at peak times for the business in return for either shorter working weeks or additional annual leave at trough times. This should ensure that during peak periods such as Renewals and UK admissions the business effectively creates more available working hours allowing the processes to be run more effectively aiming to minimise processing delays and unplanned costs.

In addition to flexible working the Registration Teams have also extended opening hours. This means that operations commence at 8am and close at 6pm Monday to Friday and Saturday 10am – 4pm.

4. Assessor training

6 professional groups of Registration Assessors have now completed a Review Days since January. The main topic at Review was feeding back into improving the quality of decision making following experience gained from our Registration Appeals process. The day incorporated discussion and an assessment exercise.

Attendance at some Review Days was low. This was mainly due to Assessors' having prior commitments or workload. The majority of Assessors who attended provided useful feedback and expressed how valid the day was both as a learning and networking opportunity. A suggestion was made that attendance should be compulsory to encourage better turnout at future events. This feedback will be considered as part of the performance review process which is under development.

5. End of Grandparenting

As expected the last six months of Grandparenting for the first twelve professions saw a large increase in applications. This increase was larger than expected with a total of 500% increase in workload over this period. The Grandparenting/International Team put in extra hours and a huge effort to ensure all applications were acknowledged and on the system within a week of the closing date. Thus ensuring that the final totals in the reports are accurate. The team are already underway in working through the application forms by upping output by 40% over the past four weeks.

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