



## Freedom of Information Request: FA19/09/01166

### *Part 4: 4. How many of the complaints are still outstanding as at 3/7/19 and reasons for the delay?*

- Around 426 complaints were on hand on 3 July 2019 (the Department is unable to provide a precise number as it is not possible to report on a point in time retrospectively).
- A significant reason for the fact that so many complaints are outstanding at one time is that many are regarded as complex complaints (roughly 80%). A good proportion of these relate to fraud: lodging fraudulent documentation in support of applications or without the authority of the sponsor/nominator, or cash for visas.
- Whilst we would not want to share our investigation methods outside the Department, investigation of each complaint involves the following:
  - Ascertaining whether there is sufficient evidence to put the allegations to the agent - this may sound straightforward but involves reviewing that agent's applications, business interests and connections.
  - If there is evidence, can it be put to the agent?
  - Is the agent already the subject of an investigation?
  - Is the information Protected?
  - Is the client who has complained unwilling to allow their name to be given to the agent? (A complainant must provide "permission to publish" the complaint and their name to the agent so that the agent can respond – natural justice requirement). If there is no permission to publish can other examples of the conduct be found in the agent's caseload