



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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[DWP Website](#)

Our Ref: FOI2020/72450

18 January 2021

Dear Mr Stevens,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 20 November 2020. You wrote:

In his letter of 5 March 2020 Stephen Timms asked whether the DWP would consider whether recommendations from Internal Process Reviews could be published in a suitably anonymised form. In response Therese Coffey wrote, in her letter dated 20th March 2020, that a review being carried out by DWP would consider publication of IPR material.

I'm not aware that there has been any further update on whether or not the Department will publish recommendations from IPRs. It is clear from earlier publications that the Department can publish anonymised information about IPR recommendations (see 'DWP FOI releases for May 2016', gov.uk, 12/05/2016).

Please provide documents showing recommendations from Internal Process Reviews since 2016 in a suitably anonymised form.

If the information can only be provided for a shorter time period then please indicate which time period it would be possible to provide information for (e.g. for the years 2019 & 2020).

If the information is due to be published in future then please provide a rough expected publication date.

DWP Response

The Department has completed its search for the information you have requested and we are able to confirm that we do hold the information you have requested.

Please note that some of the information cannot be disclosed and is being exempt from release for the reasons noted below. For ease, I have split the response to your request into two sections.

Section 1

You asked for copies of all Internal Process Reviews (IPRs) that had been completed between the years **2016 to 2020**.

I can confirm that we hold the information that you have requested. A copy of the information which can be disclosed, in line with the First Tier Tribunal decision in EA/2015/0237, is provided in Annex A. This includes all IPRs completed between **January 2016 and March 2019**.

Internal Process Reviews help us to understand the circumstances of our customers' experience with DWP, to enable us to learn and improve the service we offer. Internal Process Reviews consider whether the Departments' processes were correctly followed and whether they met our customers' needs.

This FOI publication contains all Internal Process Reviews and Peer Reviews completed from January 2016 to March 2019. These reports have been redacted to protect the identities of the customers detailed within them. We have shared information within the reports where this does not risk unintentionally disclosing information that is about a person or might identify any person, including identification from other relevant documents.

Section 2

The information you requested covering IPRs completed from **April 2019 to November 2020** is being withheld as the Department engages an exemption from disclosure because it relates to the formulation or development of government policy – Section 35(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act. This exemption protects the private space within which Ministers and their policy advisers can develop policies without the risk of premature disclosure.

As required by the FOIA, we have also assessed the public interest for against disclosure. There is a public interest in greater transparency which makes government more accountable to the electorate and increases trust. There is also a public interest in being able to assess the quality of advice being given to ministers and subsequent decision making.

However, good government depends on good decision-making and this needs to be based on the best advice available and a full consideration of all the options without fear of premature disclosure. If this public interest cannot be protected there is a risk that decision-making will become poorer and will be recorded inadequately

On balance, DWP is satisfied that in this instance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure. Therefore, the information you seek will not be released.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team
Department for Work and Pensions

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk or by writing to: DWP Central FoI Team, Caxton House, 6-12 Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA.

Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Website: [ICO Contact Information](#) or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745