



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Mr J Pring
john@disabilitynewsservice.com

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team
Caxton House
6-12 Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NA

freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk

[DWP Website](#)

Our Ref: FOI2020/49577

30 November 2020

Dear Mr Pring

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) request received on 02nd September 2020. You wrote:

In May 2016, the department released redacted copies of 49 peer reviews which were carried out following serious incidents and deaths of benefit claimants. Here is the link to that release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-foi-releases-for-may-2016>

Although the link still works, none of the PDFs can be extracted from the folder. I have tried using two different laptops.

Please send me fresh copies of the 49 files which I am able to open in a suitable format (PDF or Word).

Please also send me copies of all Peer Reviews/Internal Process Reviews - redacted in line with the guidance provided by the Information Rights First Tier Tribunal - from:

- 1 2016*
- 2 2017*
- 3 2018*
- 4 2019*
- 5 2020*

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 three sections.

Section 1

You asked for copies of **49 Peer Reviews** that had been previously released via the DWP Gov.uk publication pages.

We can confirm that the Department holds this information. However, the information is exempt under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOIA) because the information is reasonably accessible to you, as it is already in the public domain.

We have worked with Government Digital Services to ensure that the web address where this information is stored is working correctly and can be accessed via the following web address
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-foi-releases-for-may-2016>

Section 2

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 as attachments. 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 3

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