

Mr Johnny Void c/o request-84824-31bd6636@whatdotheyknow.com

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-rexxxxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx

Our Ref: VTR 2584

26 September 2011

Dear Mr Void,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request dated 31st August 2011. In your email you asked to be provided with information answering the following questions:-

I request some information on the current trials being carried out by G4S concerning the new Personal Independence Payment (PIP) system.

The information requested is:

Question 1 - What are the scope of these trials, how many people are expected to partake, what are the time-frames and are any other companies or organisations involved in delivering this trial?

Question 2 - Were these trials made available to competitive tender and if so can the tender specification be published, or information given on where it may be obtained?

Question 3 - If these trials were not available for competitive tender then can the department release all correspondence with G4S (excluding financial information and other contract details which may be exempt from the FOI under competition rules) which relates to the nature, methods and administration of the trials. This information should include the nature of the trials being carried out eg what is the level of medical qualification (if any) of those conducting the assessments, the nature of the assessment including any formal or informal documents relating to the testing procedure or standardised questions, the methods of selection of candidates to take part in the trials etc.

Question 4 - When will the study be complete? How will information be evaluated? Where and when will these evaluations be made available to the public?

Question 5 - Are G4S involved in any other work relating to disability testing or health testing for the DWP, whether regarding the new PIP system or the current administration of eligibility tests for ESA?

Question 6 - Are there any formal plans to include G4S in the roll out of PIP, are any agreements in place, or will the independent testing element of the scheme be made available to competitive tender?

Question 7 - Finally I refer to a previous request made in June 2010 regarding employment or other destinations of those denied ESA due to the Atos testing procedure (your Ref: Fol 1370). In your response you specified that "the Department is planning to commission a survey which will look at the destinations of a sample of people who make a claim for ESA. We would expect to publish the results of the survey as they become available".

Question 8 - Has this survey been carried out, and if so can the Department make available it's findings? If this is not the case then can the Department confirm that there is still no information or statistics available relating to how many people denied ESA are able to find work and in what timescale?

Question 1

We want to ensure that the assessment criteria are accurately and consistently assessing individuals and to understand their likely impact. We therefore tested the initial draft criteria between May and September, by seeking volunteers willing to take part in a single face-to-face consultation with an independent trained health professional. These are the 'trials' to which you refer. During these consultations individuals were assessed against the draft criteria which the Department published on 9 May.

To ensure the sample used was statistically robust, the bulk of the participants were identified from within the department. Department officials identified 820 individuals who currently receive or have previously claimed Disability Living Allowance who were willing to take part in this testing. Individuals were identified across the rates of DLA allowing us to work with people who have a wide range of health conditions and impairments. We also worked with a number of disability groups to identify 117 participants from key groups we were keen to look at more closely and where individuals might be harder to reach.

Involvement was completely voluntary and did not affect any benefits an individual was claiming or may claim in the future. Furthermore, an individual could change their mind about participating at any time, for any reason. The testing took place across the United Kingdom between May and September. Of the 937 volunteers, Atos Healthcare carried out 99 of the appointments, using an existing contract, and G4S carried out the remaining 838.

Question 2 and 3

The trials you refer to were carried out under an extension to a contract awarded for an earlier data-gathering exercise, carried out in early 2011. To award this contract, DWP undertook a restricted tender process with a number of bidders.

As requested, please find enclosed a copy of the Invitation to Tender (ITT) document for the initial exercise ("Personal Independence Payment Research to the Department for Work and Pensions") and the Request for Proposal (RFP) document for the exercise you refer to ("Personal Independence Payments Assessment Phase 2").

Personal details have been withheld as this information is exempt under Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOI). The Section 40 exemption is on the basis that it is personal data about a third party and disclosure would breach data protection principles.

Please note that, with regard to Appendix A of the Research Specification on page 14 of the ITT, references to 'scores' for particular descriptors or for entitlement to the benefit (paragraphs 3 and 6) did not apply to the testing exercises. Scores and thresholds were not included in this exercise as they had not been decided. The inclusion of this information in the ITT was to demonstrate to bidders how the Department envisaged the assessment for Personal Independence Payment to be delivered when the benefit is introduced in 2013.

Question 4

The testing ended on 9 September. The information gathered during this exercise will be analysed by Departmental analysts and used to assess the validity and reliability of the initial draft criteria, as well as to better understand their likely impact on the current DLA caseload. We intend to publish both the findings from this testing and a second draft of the assessment criteria later in the autumn.

Question 5

No.

Question 6

DWP will undertake a comprehensive competitive tender process prior to awarding a contract to provide medical services for PIP.

Questions 7 – 8

It is difficult to determine from administrative data why applicants close their claims, or their subsequent destinations. Claimants leaving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) are not required to inform the Department of their destinations and hence the information that is collected on destinations, or reasons for leaving, is incomplete and not robust enough for publication.

However, the Department has conducted various research projects to understand the experiences of claimants to ESA. Earlier in the year, the Department published research on a

sample of ESA customers, which included questions on the current status of those who had closed their claim.

The report can be found here:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2011-2012/rrep745.pdf>

Section 4 shows that of all ESA leavers in the survey, 37 per cent said they had moved into work.

The Department has also conducted qualitative research on the subsequent activities of a sample of customers whose claim for ESA was unsuccessful – either because they withdrew their claim or it was closed by Jobcentre Plus before it was assessed, or because they were assessed as fit for work at the Work Capability Assessment. The research focuses on people who did not move into work, or appeal, when their ESA claim ended.

The report can be found at the following link:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2011-2012/rrep762.pdf>

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central FoI Team

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-requexx@xxx.xxx.xxx.uk or by writing to DWP, Central FoI Team, 5th Floor The Adelphi, 1-11, John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HT. 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
www.ico.gov.uk