

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: VTR 71

29 February 2012

Dear Mr Zola,

Thank you for your email requesting a review of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) handling of your previous Freedom of Information request.

You specifically stated;

I am writing to request an internal review of Department for Work and Pension's handling of my FOI request 'Successful bidders'.

My request was based on the fact that you have already released names before and I do not think you have considered the Public interest properly, as the DWP is providing free labour to organisations, which means this is a subsidy funded by the Public often to let big business make profits from free labour. It is in the Public interest for them to be informed how its money is being used to profit shareholders.

Please be assured that your request has been given our full consideration and that all aspects of your review were taken fully into account. The review was conducted by an independent official of the Department, of the relevant grade and authority to carry out such requests. The case has been examined afresh, and guidance has been sought from domain experts to ensure all factors were taken fully into account.

The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) acknowledges that there is a public interest in organisations involved in providing work placements for the Work Programme; we have in fact released this information following previous FOI requests. More recently however, we have become aware of various campaigns aimed at harming the commercial interests of companies involved in delivering the Work Programme as well as a potentially undermining Government policy. For that reason the Department will not comply with further FOI requests to release information about companies who provide, or have provided, work placements.

I maintain that the exemption applied to withhold this information (section 43 (2)) is correct and that it is in the public's interest to ensure that DWP obtains goods or services on the best commercial terms and that we protect the legitimate commercial interests of our suppliers, to undermine the process could also harm unemployed people who find this to be a useful stepping stone back to employment. Work Experience gives unemployed people the opportunity to be placed with local businesses where they are able to gain valuable work experience, improve their CVs and marketability to potential employers

You have now exhausted the Departmental internal review process; if you are not content with the outcome, the next step is for you to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF www.ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol Team

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

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