

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk

Our Ref: 2438

24 June 2013

Dear Mr Walker,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 25 May 2013 and the previous Internal Review ref 460. You asked for:-

Further to your response 2086 to my previous FOI request, I wish to make a new request concerning the 'My Strengths' online test.

1) Please provide details of all offices where the test has been used.

2) When did the programme start and is the test still being used now - if not, when did it finish being used?

3) How many Jobseeker Directions were issued relating to the test?

4) Please provide a copy of all information issued to staff regarding the test including the referral process and how those directed to take the test were selected.

5) Why were Jobseeker Directions issued if the test was supposed to be voluntary?

6) Who was responsible for evaluating the results of the programme?

We can confirm that this response has been drafted in conjunction with the Behavioural Insights Team at the Cabinet Office who are responsible for the piloting of this tool. For any technical queries relating to this issue please contact:

Correspondence Team
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

Email publiccorrespondence@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk

General enquiries 020 7276 1234

In response to your questions, and in response to your Internal Review reference 460:

Question 1. In Essex District Loughton and Colchester offices were involved in using the test. In Durham and Tees Valley District the test was used in all offices. These are: Billingham, Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Crook, Darlington, Durham, Eston, Guiseborough, Hartlepool, Loftus, Middlesborough Offices, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Redcar, Seaham, Spennymoor, Stanley, Stockton and Thornaby

Question 2. The pilot started in Durham and Tees Valley Offices from April 2012, in Loughton from July 2012 and Colchester from January 2013. The DWP has not used the test since 8 May 2013.

Question 3. The DWP are aware of 4 Jobseeker's Directions which were issued in error. The test was always intended to be voluntary.

Question 4. This is included as part of a facilitated Coaching Session under Building Resilience. Advisers would decide using their knowledge of each individual claimant whether they felt it would be beneficial for the claimant to complete a 'My Strengths' test. The sessions were delivered by experts and the sessions are for coaching and take on the form of a seminar rather than a lecture, hence lack of a script/materials.

Question 5. The 4 Jobseekers Directions that were issued were issued in error and no subsequent sanctions or penalties were imposed.

Question 6. DWP & Cabinet Office

If you have any queries relating to this Fol request please contact us using the above reference.

Yours sincerely,

DWP | Operations

DWP Central Fol 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-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, 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 www.ico.gov.uk