Dear John Slater,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) request received on 8 April. You wrote:

"On 25 March 2021 new regulations relating to work capability assessments ("WCA") being carried out by telephone or video came into force.

I assume that the DWP will have carried out an evaluation of WCAs being completed by telephone or video prior to laying the new regulations (I know the DWP has not produced an impact assessment).

It is reasonable to assume that the evaluation resulted in a report being produced by the DWP and that submissions were made by Maximus UK Services Limited ("Maximus") (trading as Centre for Health and Disability Assessments).

RFI1: Please disclose the evaluation report produced by the DWP into the carrying out of WCA via telephone or video.

RFI1a: If earlier drafts of the evaluation report are readily available and do not breach S.12 please disclose those as well.

RFI2: Please disclose the submission provided by Maximus to the DWP. It is assumed that these submissions took the form of a small number of written reports. If these reports can be provided within S.12 cost limits, please do so. For the avoidance of doubt, I am not interested in individual emails or other documents that refer to the evaluation.

Any information that is exempt under section 40 FOIA is considered to be outside the scope of this request for information."
DWP Response

I can confirm that the Department holds the information you are seeking relevant to RFI1 and RFI1a. However, Section 22 and 22a of the Freedom of Information Act exempts this information from disclosure. This is because the information is part of an ongoing programme of research and is intended for publication at a later date.

I can confirm that Maximus UK Service Limited/Centre for Health and Disability Assessments did not provide any written submissions, relevant to RFI2.

This exemption requires the public interest for and against disclosure to be weighed in the balance. There is a public interest in information being released as soon as possible. There is a strong public interest in permitting public authorities to publish information in a manner and form and at a time of their own choosing. It is a part of the effective conduct of public affairs that the general publication of information is a conveniently planned and managed activity within the reasonable control of public authorities in this instance the Department has a reasonable entitlement to make its own arrangements to do so.

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.