

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: FOI2019/26275

10 September 2019

Dear Sean Brawley,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 12 July. You asked:

Recently, a number of quotes from an internal message board for DWP staff were shared as part of a BBC news story.

Please provide all posts from this message board containing the words "Capita" or "ATOS".

DWP Response:

As confirmed in my previous letter dated 12 August 2019, we do hold information falling within the terms of your request. We have now concluded our consideration of the balance of the public interest of releasing the information you have asked for.

The information you have requested is being withheld as it falls under the exemption in section 31 (1) (a): Law enforcement of the Freedom of Information Act. This exemption covers information that would make anyone, including the public authority itself, more vulnerable to crime.

The exemption in section 31 (1) (a) is a 'qualified' exemption, which means that public authorities are required to consider the arguments in favour of disclosing the information and those in favour of maintaining the exemption. In considering this 'balance of public interest test', we have taken into account that there is a legitimate public interest in government departments disclosing information that holds us to account and increases transparency about how we perform our functions on behalf of the public. We also acknowledge that transparency can increase public confidence and trust in government.

However, there is a very strong public interest in protecting society from crime and in preventing disclosure of information that would be likely to facilitate or encourage criminal activity. The Freedom of Information Act is about disclosure 'to the world' and in our judgement it would not be appropriate to make information publicly available which would make the Department or its systems more vulnerable to crime.

In this case, we believe that release of the requested information into the public domain would be likely to enable and facilitate people to find ways to commit benefit fraud. The greater the

potential for a disclosure to result in criminal activity, the greater the public interest in maintaining the exemption.

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

Yours sincerely,

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@dw.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, 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
Web: ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745