

To Mr J Newman
C/O WDTK

DWP Business Management Team
Health & Disability Assessments (Operations)
DWP.MEDICALSERVICESCORRESPxxxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx

1 February 2013

Dear Mr Newman,

Freedom of Information Act - Request for Internal Review
Our Reference: FOI IR 35

Thank you for your email dated 9 January 2013 requesting a review of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) handling of your request.

In your email of 09 January (IR35) you requested an internal review of DWP's handling of your previous Freedom of Information (FOI 3642 2998), specifically you asked:

I am writing to request an internal review of Department for Work and Pensions's handling of my FOI request 'Atos norms'.

Firstly I must correct your statistical assertions. The arbitrary and "pragmatic" exclusion of outlying data is NOT sound practice – clearly not all outliers are illegitimate data contaminants and cannot be discounted without good reason – they may just reflect the inherent variation in the data population. Your use of the word pragmatic" is revealing as it demonstrates a focus on (desired) results rather than statistical rigour. At very least the effect of these exclusions should be closely monitored if accuracy is the prime objective. The public concern is therefore obvious – that this undocumented elimination of data is used to massage averages in a predetermined direction.

Q1: There must be some rules around what data can be excluded to ensure consistency of approach and I would like to know what they are currently.

Q2: What evidence is there to show that outlying data at BOTH ends of the spectrum are equally discounted and the net effect it has had on averages?

If you do not have the information, please just say so, but it will of course mean that you have adopted an ad hoc method of data manipulation without interest in the potential consequences.

The fact that you have throughout avoided any degree of quantification is best dealt with through a separate request at another time...

The Freedom of Information (Fol) Act allows 20 working days from date of receipt of the request in which to respond. We endeavour to answer promptly and no later than the 20 day deadline, unless the deadline is extended to consider if an exemption applies.

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