

Emma Milton
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[freedom-of-information-
request@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk)

[DWP Website](https://www.dwp.gov.uk)

Our Ref: FOI2023/00227

6 January 2023

Dear Emma Milton,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 3 January. You wrote:

“I would like to request the following information under the FOI Act:

Timeframe: 1 Jan 19 – 31 Dec 22

- 1.A copy of the departments policies on the implementation and conduct of business continuity that were extant during this period.
- 2.A copy of the departments policies on the implementation and conduct of organisational resilience that were extant during this period.
- 3.Copies of any reviews conducted during the timeframe of these policies.
- 4.Minutes or records of decisions of governance meetings discussing the departments policies on business continuity and/or organisational resilience.”

DWP Response

We can confirm that the Department holds the information you are seeking.

However, we are engaging an exemption from disclosure under Section 31(2)(i) of the Fol Act, which protects a variety of law enforcement interests covering the prevention or detection of crime.

As required by the Fol Act the use of this qualified exemption requires the public interest for and against disclosure to be assessed.

We recognise that there is a public interest in the Business Continuity Plans of the Department for Work and Pensions that include our policies and implementation and any reviews of these plans. We recognise that release of the information would assure the public that the department is prepared and able to deliver key business priorities and minimise impacts during difficult times and would inform the public of business continuity policies that were implemented during particular periods including between 1 Jan 19 and 31 Dec 22.

However, when considering arguments against disclosure we have to consider the impact on the department’s ability to respond to threats and risks. These plans and policies may be invoked again in the future and if disclosed this information could be used to attack the department whilst the Business Continuity Plan is invoked or compromise the Departments

ability to respond and or invoke our plans. In addition, if the reviews of these plans and or minutes or records of decisions of governance meetings were disclosed the information contained could also leave the department at risk of attack and compromise the department's ability to respond during an incident.

If this information was made available the safety, security and wellbeing of staff and customers could be put at risk as someone may be able to create such an environment whereby all the mitigations set out in our Business Continuity Plan are unavailable. The department has to protect its ability to respond to threats and risk and protect the safety, security and wellbeing of its staff and customers.

On balance DWP is satisfied that in this instance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure. Therefore, the information you seek will not be released.

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 Fol 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 FOI and EIR complaints](https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/foi/) or telephone 0303 123 1113.