

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: 2016-IR285_IR289

29 July 2016

Dear Bill Webber

Freedom of Information ref: 2016-IR285_IR289

Thank you for your request for an internal review of your Freedom of Information request 2016 - 2131 which was answered on 30 June 2016

You asked in IR285:

“Please pass this on to the person who conducts Freedom of Information reviews.

I am writing to request an internal review of Department for Work and Pensions's handling of my FOI request 'Deaths Caused By The Dept Work and Pensions Staff'.

The response you have given to my request is not true. In fact you do have the information I require or at least some it. How is it possible for the Dept Not to be aware of deaths that they have or have not caused if they had been contacted about it. I am concerned that this response is an attempt to avoid giving me that information because the Dept Work of Pensions is highly likely to be hiding these figures. I am demanding that you undertake an immediate internal review of your procedures because I believe you are withholding information or you do not know you hold the information when in fact you do.

A full history of my FOI request and all correspondence is available on the Internet at this address:

[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/deaths caused by the dept work a 2](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/deaths_caused_by_the_dept_work_a_2)”

You asked in IR289:

“Please can you explain why on this occasion you gave a dishonest reply to my request.

This is a published article that proves you do have the information.

Please explain consider this when you undertake your internal review.

<http://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/tribunal-rules-dwp-must-release-information-from-secret-benefit-deaths-reviews/>”

In your original request you asked:

“Deaths Caused By The Dept Work and Pensions Staff

How many suicides have taken place over people not being able to manage due to the failure of Dept and Work and Pensions staffs to give them enough monies to live on and sustain a lifestyle that the law says they must have.

How many persons that were claiming or attempting to claim benefits from the Dept Work Pensions have had relatives or friends reporting to the Dept Work Pensions that the persons death was caused by suicide and the reasons given for those suicides are not being given enough to live on or their entitlement by Dept Work Pensions.

How many Dept Work and Pensions staffs has been reported to the CPS for manslaughter following people committing suicide as a result of the staff at the Dept Work Pensions not giving them enough monies to live off.

How many Dept Work and Pensions staff have been prosecuted for manslaughter following the suicide of a claimant who was not given his or her entitlement or suffered a failed claim and this was reported to the Dept Work Pensions after the persons death.

I require the information to petition the CPS and my MP for prosecutions over the deaths of claimants when there is evidence their deaths were attributed to by the negligence of DWP staff. Bullying is a way of contributing to a persons death by suicide and lots of claimants feel they have been bullied by the DWP, I WANT TO KNOW HOW MANY DEATHS THE DWP staff are responsible for?”

I am of a senior grade to the person who dealt with your request previously, and can confirm that I have carried out an internal review. I confirm that I have considered your request afresh. In conducting my review, I have discussed the original reply, the handling and the decisions on what can be provided with the officer who drafted it.

Firstly, I find no issues with the process of handling your request. The Department's procedures for handling Freedom of Information requests were followed, and the response was issued within 20 working days as required by the legislation.

I can confirm that the Department does not hold the specific information you requested in your original FOI request. Whilst we do routinely receive death register data, to ensure we do not cause distress to others by trying to contact the deceased, we do not receive the reason or cause of death so do not know which of those deaths were due to suicide.

To assist you in obtaining information on suicides you were given information about where this information is held.

In your review request you have mentioned an article which refers to the publication of 49 Peer Reviews. Peer Reviews are a tool for staff to look at the handling of a specific case. Their purpose is to scrutinize the Department's handling of particular cases to identify whether

processes have been properly followed and if appropriate, identify recommendations for changes to the process.

I can inform you that the information referred to was published on 12 May 2016 here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-foi-releases-for-may-2016>

In this case I am satisfied that the Department does not hold the specific information you requested and uphold the original response. I have provided additional information which should assist you if you wish to raise a new FOI request.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central FoI 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@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central FoI 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 <https://ico.org.uk/>