



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

DWP Central Freedom of  
Information Team  
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London  
SW1H 9NA

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

[DWP Website](#)

Our Ref: FOI2022/96865

29 December 2022

Dear Carole Keith,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 2 December. You wrote:

“The processing of Disability benefits, such as Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment are taking much longer to be dealt with. Is this still due to a backlog or is this the normal time it will take now.”

## **DWP Response**

It may be helpful if we explain the role of the Fol Act. It provides a legal right of access to recorded information held by a public authority like the DWP, subject to certain exemptions that may apply. The Act does not oblige a public authority to create new information to answer questions; nor does it require a public authority to give advice, opinion or explanation, generate answers to questions, or create or obtain information it does not hold.

If you ask a question, rather than requesting recorded information, we will provide you with the recorded information that best answers the question. Once we have provided the recorded information, we have met our obligations under the Act; interpreting the information provided is up to you.

Your request makes a statement seeking to engage us in debate which you want us to respond to. This would need new information to be created.

We do not hold any recorded information to answer your request and will therefore not be progressing your request any further.

However, you may find the following explanation useful. We have provided this outside our obligations under the Fol Act.

- The department is committed to ensuring people can access financial support through Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in a timely manner. Reducing customer journey times for PIP claimants is a priority for the Department and we are working constantly to make improvements to our service.
- We always aim to make an award decision as quickly as possible, taking into account the need to review all available evidence, including that from the claimant.

- Claimants are kept informed and updated at each stage of the process, including our improved text message service.
- In most instances PIP awards can be backdated to the date of claim.
- The time it takes to clear a claim and the number of people awaiting a decision can vary for numerous reasons, including:
  - customer demand, which has seen unprecedented levels of new claims recently
  - departmental and assessment provider Health Professional resource
  - reacting to external situations, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic; the effects of which we're continuing to experience.
- The current average clearance time for new claims is 16 weeks end-to-end, which includes the period allowed for customers to complete and return their questionnaire.
- Customers are currently waiting an average of 8 weeks from the time they return their questionnaire to their assessment, when it's required.
- Claims from people who are terminally ill are currently being cleared in 3 days on average.
- The clearance times for Disability Living Allowance claims are not published, so this information is not available.

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

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### **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](mailto: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](#) or telephone 0303 123 1113.