

Dear Mr Pring,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 11 November 2014 asking us to review our handling of our earlier response – our reference 4551. You said:

With reference to 4551, you state that because details of names, etc, are confidential, you are not able to send me copies of any of the reviews.

However, there is no reason why you could not redact names, addresses, etc, and any other identifying information from the reviews and then send them to me.

I would be grateful if you could do this for as many of the most recent reviews of individual cases as you can within your £600 cost limit, and then email the 'clean' versions to me. Please start with the most recent and work backwards until you hit your spending limit

You wrote again on 18 January seeking a response. *"Which minister made the decision to start carrying out these reviews in February 2012, and why they made this decision"*. You will receive a separate reply on this aspect.

DWP response

I apologise for the delay in responding to you. The handling of your request has been considered afresh and I am content that our earlier response was appropriate. Peer Reviews contain a significant amount of personal information, which may relate to the claimant or third parties and we are of the view that even a redacted version may contain sufficient information to allow the real possibility that individuals might be identified.

Section 123 of the Social Security Administration Act (SSSA) 1992 makes it an offence for anyone who is employed in social security administration to disclose without lawful authority any information which he acquired in the course of that employment and which relates to a particular person. All the personal information contained in a Peer Review report is captured by this provision.

This triggers the FoI exemption at section 44 of the FoI Act which recognises existing statutory bars to disclosure contained in other statutes. Section 44 is an absolute exemption which means that there is no requirement to consider the public interest test in such cases.

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

Yours sincerely,

Sue Fetton
Senior Manager,
Operations Correspondence and Feedback

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@dwpgsi.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 www.ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745