

Our Ref: Fol 0073

Date: 02/03/2018

Dear Mrs P Langton,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 7 January 2018. I apologise for the delay in replying. You asked:

From the National Audit Office Department for Work AND Pensions: Using leaflets to communicate with the public about services and entitlements.

Published Janauary 25th 2006

The NAO tested the availability of a number of key leaflets at 100 departmental outlets and a further 100 other sites where customers might seek information.

Leaflets for pensioners and disabled people were available at 20 per cent of all these sites.

The NAO found core leaflets were available at only half of the 100 Departmental sites visited and where leaflets were not available staff found it difficult to help customers obtain information.

Staff provided a range of responses, including giving out telephone numbers to call or alternative sites to visit, but there is currently no single number for the public to call to get leaflets.

"It is vital that people can rely on the accuracy of the leaflets the government produces to make informed choices about their lives.

And it is vital that they can get hold of these leaflets and easily understand them when they do.

Those leaflets that were available were not always the correct versions; for example, one recently reprinted leaflet was out of date at 40 of the 44 sites where it was available.

In addition, some offices had different versions of the same leaflet on display.

The report notes that steps have been taken at a senior level within The Pension Service to improve this situation and recommends that other managers should follow suit.

The Department for Work and Pensions has made progress in these respects but needs to manage better the leaflets it produces to ensure those needing information can access it when they need to."

Sir John Bourn, head of the NAO, 25 January 2006 Providing inaccurate or out of date information in any communication can have consequences for both customers and the Department (Box 1).

These are not theoretical risks. In the 1990s, for example, the Department's failure to inform the public following a change in legislation about the Inherited State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme (SERPS) led to people being misled about their future pension entitlement.

Staff at local offices decides when to order more leaflets and are responsible for maintaining the currency of the stock they hold.

To conserve the stocks of some leaflets, and to prevent local stock piles, some leaflets have restrictions on the number that can be ordered at any one time.

How does the Department manage the risks of misinforming the public?

10 All government departments are now required to identify and record their key risks in order that they can manage them.

The Department for Work and Pensions identifies and records its risks via a strategic risk register, which is reviewed routinely by its Strategic Risk Review Board.

This register lists "providing unreliable advice or information to the public" as one of its 17 key corporate risks.

The Pension Service has taken the most comprehensive approach and has demonstrated good practice in managing the risks of inaccuracy.

It has developed a Content Management System to hold details of all the leaflets and information products across government departments containing references to pension's information, more than 1,000 products.

In 2003-04, out-of-date stocks of leaflets were a particular problem in The Pension Service, and over 60 per cent of the leaflets distributed to customers from the seven Pension Centres visited by Internal Audit were out of date, some by up to two years.

My Freedom of Information Request please could you supply the results of the any audits by Strategic Risk Review Board on risks associated with out of date leaflets for 1993 1994 1995 and 2011.

From a letter that I was sent by Lynne Wray State Pension Manager on the 20th February 2017 with regards to my Complaints she had written DWP also ran a pension education campaign in 2004, which included informing people of the future equalisation of State Pension Age.

The campaign included: A women's Pension Pack containing leaflets for women about changes in State Pension age, made available through the Pension Service.

My Freedom of Information Request is what version was the leaflet in the Womens Pension Pack, please could you sent me a copy of this leaflet, is this leaflet on the Content Management System which according to National Audit Office Department for Work and Pensions hold details of all the leaflets and information products across government departments containing references to pension's information.

*From BSB (Pensions) Room 86Q, Longbenton e mail to all Pension Staff
Series No: 27/95 Subject: The Pensions Act 1995
Date: 20 July 1995*

42. To limit the number of enquiries directed at the LOs a press announcement has been issued. This advises customers that two information leaflets 'Equality in State Pension Age' (EQPla) and 'The Pensions Act 1995' are being prepared which outline the changes and can be obtained by ringing the following helpline number 0345 313233 (local call rate will apply)

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43. A supply of information leaflets (200) will be delivered to each local office for distribution by local office staff as soon as possible.

Equality in State Pension Age '(published in December 1993); and Security, Equality, Choice: The Future for Pensions ' (published in June 1994).

My Freedom of Information Request would be could you supply me a copy of the press announcement that was issued to limit the number of enquiries from Series No: 27/95 Subject: The Pensions Act 1995 Date: 20 July 1995.

From the DWP I received a letter from Mark Fairbain Complaint Resolution Manager date 3rd March 2017 which he had written, Some other activities we have undertaken to communicate the change are: published Leaflet EQP1A "Equality in State Pension age – A summary of the changes (July 1995)

On the E-Mail to the Pension Staff Series No: 27/95 Subject: The Pensions Act 1995 it has the leaflet Equality in State Pension Age (published in December 1993); also it says that leaflets 'Equality in State Pension Age' (EQPla) and 'The Pensions Act 1995' are being prepared.

My Freedom of Information Request was the Equality in State Pension Age leaflet published in December 1993 was not used by the DWP after the 1995 Act was in force and was not found In 2003-04 audits , when out-of-date stocks of leaflets were a particular problem in The Pension Service, and when did the DWP Sites had the supply of information leaflets (200) which would be delivered to each local office for distribution by local office staff as soon as possible, does this mean that only half of the leaflets would be (EQPla), how many (EQPla) were given out.

From the DWP I received a letter from Mark Fairbain Complaint Resolution Manager date 3rd March 2017 which he had written a reply to my complaint he said You also

complained about the accuracy of information provided and you specifically mention a government website which still had a 60 as the State Pension age for women as recently as February this year. We did indeed become aware of incorrect information on a Government Gateway web page and we corrected the information within 24 Hours.

My Freedom of Information Request is Mr Mark Fairbain Complaint Resolution Manager had confirmed from my letter from him date 3rd Mrch 2017 that a government website which still had a 60 as the State Pension age for women as recently as February this year, Please could you forward me the details of the Government Website that still had a 60 as the State Pension age for women as recently as February this year?

DWP Response

As you have asked a number of questions, the Department has responded to each one individually below;

My Freedom of Information Request please could you supply the results of the any audits by Strategic Risk Review Board on risks associated with out of date leaflets for 1993 1994 1995 and 2011.

Response – The Strategic Risk Review Board and papers associated with it have not been retained due to the time elapsed.

My Freedom of Information Request is what version was the leaflet in the Womens Pension Pack, please could you sent me a copy of this leaflet, is this leaflet on the Content Management System which according to National Audit Office Department for Work and Pensions hold details of all the leaflets and information products across government departments containing references to pension's information.

Response – The leaflet issued with the Women's Pension Pack was the 'Women's guide to Pensions' (PM6), printed in 2000 and updated or reprinted in 2002, 2003 and 2004. Due to the time elapsed the Department only holds the 2004 version which is attached to this response.

My Freedom of Information Request would be could you supply me a copy of the press announcement that was issued to limit the number of enquiries from Series No: 27/95 Subject: The Pensions Act 1995 Date: 20 July 1995.

Response – Due to time elapsed the Department no longer holds this information.

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Response – Thank you for drawing our attention to the letter dated March 2017, this letter should have stated the information had been found to be incorrect at February 2016. This letter is in the process of being updated.

The Department for Work and Pensions has been made aware of incorrect information on a Government Gateway web page in the past and this information was corrected

The Government Gateway webpage that you have referenced was a help page that listed all the services available via the Government Gateway. The link to that page is; http://www.gateway.gov.uk/Help/Help.aspx?content=help_government_services_online.htm&languageid=0

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Operations Fol 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@dwpgsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol 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.gov.uk