



Department
for Work &
Pensions

DWP Central Freedom of
Information Team
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John Slater
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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: FOI2021/99468

6 January 2022

Dear John Slater,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) request received on 4 December 2021. You wrote:

"In the article:

<https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/dwp-refuses-to-publish-report-that-found-disabled-claimants-had-unmet-needs/>

about the publication of the report of the NatCen research project titled The Uses of Health and Disability Benefits, the journalist John Pring reported that a whistleblower explained

"After being shown the first draft of the report, DWP told NatCen to reduce the number of references to "unmet needs" and to delete some of its analysis.

The whistleblower, who is close to the team that prepared the report, said: "It was obvious to me that the findings about unmet needs and adequacy of benefits were not what the government wanted to hear."

They said that the final version, which was submitted to DWP in September 2020, had far fewer references to unmet needs."

RFI1: Please disclose the first draft of the NatCen report "The Uses of Health and Disability Benefits" referenced above."

DWP Response

We can confirm that we may hold information falling within the terms of your request; however, we need more time to consider aspects of your request.

We are writing to advise you that the following exemption apply to the information that you have requested:

Section 35(1)(a) Formulation of government policy

Section 10(3) of the FoI Act provides that, where public authorities have to consider the balance of the public interest in relation to a request, they do not have to comply with the request until such a time as is reasonable in the circumstances.

We have not yet reached a decision on the balance of the public interest. We need to consider all the circumstances of the case, to determine where the balance of the public interest lies in relation to the information that you have requested. Therefore, we will not be able to respond to your request in full within 20 working days of the initial receipt of your request.

We are therefore aiming to let you have a full response by 3 February 2022.

Please note that we have received your application for an Internal Review on the handling of this request as you believe we have not responded within the statutory timescale of 20 working days. According to our records your FOI was received into the Department on 4 December 2021 and your 20 working days would end on 6 January 2022.

As defined under Section 10 of the FoI Act “working day” means any day other than a Saturday, a Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a day which is a bank holiday under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 in any part of the United Kingdom. For example, 4 January 2022 was only a bank holiday in Scotland but the non-working day status applies to any and all FoI received across the United Kingdom, regardless if they observe that day as a bank holiday or not.

We hope that helps to provide some information on the status of your request and we will look to formally respond to the Internal Review request at the same time we respond to your original FoI request.

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 FoI 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 Contact Information](#) or telephone 0303 123 1113.