



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

DWP Central Freedom of  
Information Team  
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John Slater  
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[DWP Website](https://www.dwp.gov.uk)

Our Ref: FOI2021/99468

3 February 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 wrote to you on 6 January 2022 informing you that we may hold information falling within the scope of your request but that we needed additional time to consider aspects relating to it.

Unfortunately, we have still not been able to complete these aspects and as such we require more time to fully consider all elements of your request in order to provide you with a full response.

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

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

**Section 36(2)(b) and 36(2)(c) – Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs**

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.

For the avoidance of doubt, we are not suggesting that both Section 35 and Section 36 exemptions would apply at the same time, we know this cannot happen. We have not yet reached a decision on the balance of the public interest in relation to these two exemptions. As 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 March 2022.**

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 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.