

Kathleen McDonald
By Email: request-494808-08917b92@whatdotheyknow.com

25 July 2018

Fol ref No: 2996

Dear Kathleen McDonald,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 3 July 2018 in which you said:

The 1950s women were robbed of their pensions and you are doing nothing to rectify this. I have been waiting on an answer from Independent Case Examiner for nearly 14 months. Do you think this is acceptable? You took on extra staff and it is taking them this length of time to answer a few cases, what are you going to do, ignore us again, wait till we are dead then you can wipe your hands of us.

Response:

The Freedom of Information Act gives any person the legal right of access to any and all recorded information which is held by a public authority. The Act does not require the Department to provide opinions or explanations, generate answers to questions, or create or obtain information it does not hold. In cases where a person asks a question, rather than requests recorded information, we do our utmost to provide the recorded information that best answers the question. Once the public authority has provided the recorded information, it has met its obligations under the Act; interpretation of the information provided is left to the requestor.

The role of Independent Case Examiner is to consider complaints of maladministration (service failure), it has no role to play in considering matters of government policy or legislation, associated with state pension retirement age.

The Independent Case Examiner's (ICE) Office provides a demand led service. The time it takes to allocate and process complaints varies depending on the volume of referrals received, the complexity of the cases on hand and the available investigative resource. The ICE Office is currently experiencing high volumes of referrals about the communication of changes to women's state pension age entitlement.

As of 30 June 2018:

- the ICE Office had received a total of 3720 complaints about the communication of changes to women's state pension age; and
- the Independent Case Examiner had issued 124 final reports in response those complaints, none of which were upheld on that element of complaint.

The ICE office brings complaints into investigation based on the date they were accepted for examination.

In October 2017, the ICE set up a dedicated team to deal with complaints about the communication of changes to women's state pension age entitlement.

Should you require a bespoke response regarding your own case which has been accepted for investigation by the ICE office, you should contact their Customer Services Team at PO Box 209, Bootle, L20 7WA.

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

Yours Sincerely,

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@dwp.gsi.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