

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-request@dpw.gov.uk

Our Ref: FOI2020/40485

31 July 2020

Dear Anita Bellows,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 27 July. You asked:

In the High Court case of R on the application of Connor v DWP [2020] EWHC 1999 (Admin) the Department admitted that an error resulted in Mr Connor's request for reconsideration being classified as "unstructured whitemail" and being left unaddressed for 4 months.

The Department has outsourced its mail handling and therefore it is likely that the coding error described above occurred at one of its outsourced mail handling facilities or by a DWP member of staff further along the process.

The Department must hold guidance for its contractors and/or own staff about how information received from claimants is classified to enable it to be sent to the relevant part of the organisation.

Please disclose the guidance that is used by The Department's mail handling contractors and/or its own employees to classify mail that is sent to the Department.

DWP Response:

I have attached a copy of the most recent Index Business Rules that are used by our supplier Engie to scan mail received by the DWP within the Mail Opening Unit. These are constantly changing as more documents are automated and should not be regarded as definitive.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central 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@dpw.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
Web: ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745