



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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

Our Ref: FOI2020/67626

4 December 2020

Dear Finn Keaney,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) request received on 5 November 2020. You stated:

"I am writing today to request information around updated guidance you have reported issuing in the wake of Errol Graham's death.

On the 22nd July Peter Schofield gave oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Committee stating DWP had implemented new safeguarding processes to follow before stopping payments, stating "[Before] stopping a payment. The guidance that we have introduced now is very much that we would escalate that up through the system—we would do case conferencing."

I have consulted with several PIP enquiry line advisers as well as two case managers who have confirmed that no such guidance has been issued. Last week a DWP safeguarding lead confirmed that the only new safeguarding guidance issued in the wake of the Errol Graham was specific to cases where visiting officers repeatedly fail to make contact as part of a home visit.

I was advised that contrary to Mr Schofield's assertions, 'safeguarding around the stoppage of payments is being looked at but no guidance has yet been issued.'

Please provide copies of :

- the new DWP safeguarding process/es around what to do before stopping payments*
- all guidance issued to DWP employees around safeguarding and harm prevention processes which are to take place before stopping the benefits payments of vulnerable/claimants*
- all training materials relating to the above*

Please also provide the details of who this guidance and training has been issued to, by which I mean please advise which areas of the organisation and which job titles (ie 'guidance issued to all DWP staff,' 'guidance issued to all Case Managers and Safeguarding Leads'), rather than the names of individuals.

Please also advise as to the dates on which the above were issued as the information I have been given by Case Managers and Safeguarding Leads is contradictory to the evidence of Peter Schofield."

DWP Response

We can confirm that we hold information falling within the description specified in your request. However, we estimate that the cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate limit for central Government, set by regulations at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

Under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) the Department is not therefore obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing it further.

However, under section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act we should help you narrow your request so that it may fall beneath the cost limit.

We feel that you could narrow your request to be benefit specific and request only certain material for example - the guidance available to staff within a specific benefit area. We will consider any revised request but there is no guarantee that it will fall within the FOIA cost limit, or that other exemptions will not apply.

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 or 01625 545745