

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: FOI2019/09124

28 March 2019

Dear John Slater,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 4 March. You asked:

Re: NHS / DWP data-sharing technical proof of concept opportunity

At:

<https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:https://www.digitalmarketplace.service.gov.uk/digital-outcomes-and-specialists/opportunities/8859>

The Department explained:

"We've completed Discovery, including proof of concept research with a medical records broker, finding:

- Citizens don't always have / understand the information needed to process their applications*
- we have to verify their responses with medical professionals - easier if we could access directly (with appropriate consent)*
- The current process is largely clerical / paper-based, which is slow and expensive - easier if automated routine requests and digitise ad-hoc requests.*
- GPs don't always have / understand information about citizens' 'functional capability', therefore route needed to more relevant medical professionals, such as secondary and community care providers."*

RFI1: Please disclose if the Department has consulted any of the following organisations as part of its work to date:

- Information Commissioner.*
- General Medical Council.*
- Royal College of General Practitioners.*
- British Medical Association.*
- Any specialists in medical ethics.*

As part of the work to reach this point I assume the DWP will have produced a report(s) summarising what it 'discovered' and used this to obtain approval to move forward with this supplier opportunity.

RFI2: Please disclose these reports. Please note this is not a request for everything produced during the discovery process.

RFI3: If issues and risks registers/logs exist for the work to date please disclose them.

If the requested information is not available centrally then please forward this request for information to the relevant person in the Yorkshire and the Humber region.

This request is made on the basis that personal information would be redacted as it is exempt under S.40(2) FOIA.

DWP Response:

For RF|1 and RF|2, Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act allows us to direct you to information which is already reasonably accessible to you. The information you requested is available

RF|1

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564038/work-and-health-green-paper-improving-lives.pdf If you do not have access to the Internet at home, you may be able to use facilities at your local public library. However in the interests of customer service I enclose a copy of The Improving Lives Green Paper 2016.

RFI2

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-lives-the-future-of-work-health-and-disability> In the interests of customer service I enclose a copy of The Government Response to Improving Lives Green Paper, 2017

RFI3

I confirm that the information you seek for RF|3 is held by the Department but it engages an exemption from disclosure because it relates to the formulation or development of government policy – section 35(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act. This exemption protects the private space within which policy advisers can develop policies without the risk of premature disclosure.

As required by the Act, I have also assessed the public interest for against disclosure. There is a public interest in greater transparency which makes government more accountable to the electorate and increases trust. There is also a public interest in being able to assess the quality of advice being given to ministers and subsequent decision making.

However, good government depends on good decision-making and this needs to be based on the best advice available and a full consideration of all the options without fear of premature disclosure. If this public interest cannot be protected there is a risk that decision-making will become poorer and will be recorded inadequately.

An issue or risk register requires those involved in its development to be frank and open as to the potential risks involved in a project or programme, within a safe environment. Issues and risk registers encourage the use of candid language which may be open to misinterpretation. Releasing this risk register would distort rather than improve public debate as each entry contained within it is a portrayal of a risk at a particular point in time. Publishing this would present

an unhelpful picture to the public, as the risks it covers may have been replaced by mitigating action

On balance, DWP is satisfied that in this instance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure. Therefore, the information you seek will not be released.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central FoI 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@dwpgsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central FoI 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
https://ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745