



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

Red Zone,  
2nd Floor Phase 2  
Peel Park, Brunel  
Way, Blackpool,  
FY4 5ES

[www.gov.uk/dwp](http://www.gov.uk/dwp)

Email:

[freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk)

Mr Declan Murray  
[request-620604-576ca37f@whatdotheyknow.com](#)

Our Ref: FOI2019/44577

Date 8 January 2020

Dear Mr Murray,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 13 December.

You asked for:

*Dear no-reply@dwp.ecase.co.uk on behalf of DWP Health Services Correspondence, Further to your reply, if it would help the DWP FOI team, please could you narrow the request to release the information that the department does actually hold in respect of the complaints that the DWP received over this period of time it was actively running these programmes, regardless of benefit category, provider contractor and/or programme/activity- in other words, what raw data do you actually hold in respect of complaints by the public regarding private contractors?*

*To be sure, I am therefore only requesting that the department publish the data and information it does actually hold in respect of all complaints it received during this period in which this said data and information would have been shared by the private contractors with the department, in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act, and the DWP's fiduciary obligations.*

*After all, this would have been a legal requirement of the contract and therefore the DWP would have a fiduciary requirement to be made publicly accountable for the expenditure of all public money in respect of welfare provision to Parliamentary accounts and welfare committees, etc.*

Under section 14(2) of the Freedom of Information (Fol) Act, public authorities are not obliged to comply with a repeat request.

Where a public authority (in this case the department) has previously responded to a request for information which was made by any person, it is not obliged to comply with a subsequent identical or substantially similar request from that person unless a reasonable interval has elapsed between compliance with the previous request and the making of the current request.

In this case, the department has already responded to a similar request from you and under section 14(2) of the Act will not be responding afresh. Previously the department stated that we estimated that the cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate limit of £600. The appropriate limit has been specified in regulations and for central government it is set 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 the information.

We also provided further background information to explain that the department has had over 550 separate contracts with providers, and that these providers are responsible for their own complaints process therefore we would need to contact each provider to obtain all their complaints data. The information that the provider holds in relation to complaints is the departments information.

In the previous reply we included guidance on how to reduce the size of your request which included specifying the type of complaints information you require, reducing the time frame of your request, limiting your request to one specific programme or to an active programme, where information would not have been archived, then we may be able to answer the request within costs.

We will consider afresh any revised request, however, we cannot guarantee that any revised request will fall within the cost limit.

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

Yours sincerely,

Contracted Health and Employment Services Fol 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@dw.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dw.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: [https://ico.org.uk/Global/contact\\_us](https://ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us) or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745