

To: M Woodcroft  
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DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: FOI 3092

18 August 2017

Dear Mr Woodcroft,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request which we received on 24 July 2017.

You asked:

*"DWP and CHDA Contract, Time from application of ESA to WCA, Assessment costs, Complaint handling times, Monetary rewards for sanctions and "found fit for work," suicides and threat to health from your unlawful conduct (found fit for work when clearly unable too). home visit criteria*

*I see that you are quite literally being unnecessarily awkward in your responses to a FOI of the above subject. This is a question that I myself also wish to have answers too.*

*I have now, for over two years, been on the assessment rate of ESA and have repeatedly had my appointments cancelled. There was also a period of 9 months or so, in which I hear nothing.*

*I have REPEATEDLY asked the reasons as to why and the DWP has not surprisingly acted with wilful and gross negligence.*

*So answer me these:*

*Regarding the contract that you have with the CHDA, as I have clearly fallen WAY out of the timescale from application to assessment, please inform me as to the action you are required to take when the contract has been violated. I believe the time should be 13/14 weeks? Also I'd be interested in the numbers of other people this has happened too and the longest time taken.*

*As there is a clear breach of contract here and as is well known in the media a GREAT deal many other breaches, why is the DWP still using this disgusting and clearly incompetent firm Maximus/CHDA for it's WCA, when clearly they cannot fulfill the contract? As I said to one gentleman at the DWP, "If you hire a builder and the agreed contract is not fulfilled, you'd take action wouldn't you?"*

*Could you also highlight the costs of assessment and when assessments are cancelled, please inform me of the costs involved in cancelling. Is the money for an assessment paid prior to an assessment? If so, should that be cancelled, does the DWP request that payment back for failure to fulfill it's contract? Please also provide statistics on the performance of Atos and the CHDA respectively.*

*I have also made numerous complaints, a number of which have gone unanswered. What is the time to respond to complaints, as I haven't received any notification.*

*What monetary rewards are staff given, for sanctions and withdrawal of benefits? What targets are staff given or have ever been given for the above?*

*How many suicides have occurred as a result of your unlawful conduct and how many people have had their illness worsen because of being unlawfully found fit for work?*

*In addition, please give details on how many people who were sanctioned or found fit for work, had mental health problems.*

*I'd also like the criteria for a home visit, as I had mine refused. According to the DWP, it's because I do get out now and then. Yet it does not take into account that this is to places that I feel safe and even then I have anxiety and panic attacks and due to PTSD, I dissociate. Your process is making me very sick. NEEDLESLY. I dissociated in a therapy session, so the chances of me doing so in an unsafe place, put me at serious risk.*

*I have real concerns over this WCA, in that as the DWP and the vile CHDA are well aware of the excessive timescale of this and have unlawfully found me fit for work prior to any assessment made.ou also provide details of the system for the WCA, as it appears to be designed to make anyone fail. Especially those with a mental health problem.*

*Does the contract with the CDHA include monetary incentives for stripping people of their livelihoods?*

*I am making this public, as your conduct and lack thereof has caused me immense distress and further impacted upon my recovery."*

I can confirm that we hold information falling within the description specified in your request. However, in response to your request for information on the longest waiting time for a Work Capability Assessment (WCA) as the individual components of the required information would be held on a claimants benefit file. DWP would have to identify, retrieve and extract information held by different parts of DWP and Centre for Health and Disability Assessment (CHDA), analysing data sets to produce the required information. 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 the Department is not therefore obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing it further. Under section 16 of the Act we should help you narrow your request so that it may fall beneath the cost limit. The topics you ask about are very broad, you should choose a more specific subject matter. There is already some related information in the public domain which can be found here:

<https://www.chdauk.co.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=ESA>

<http://data.gov.uk/data/contracts-finder-archive/contract/1644334>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/work-capability-assessment-handbook-for-healthcare-professionals>

Also see the attached link to the GOV.UK which gives advice on making a request under the Freedom of Information Act: <https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request>

Once you have reviewed this material you may want to refine your request

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

DWP Central Fol Team

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**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](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

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.org.uk/Global/contact\\_us](http://www.ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us) or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745