



Department
for Work &
Pensions

DWP Central Freedom of
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[DWP Website](#)

Our Ref: IR2023/76821

6 November 2023

Dear Finn Keaney,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) internal review request received on 9 October relating to FOI2023/59950. You wrote:

Repeat request here if short or summarise if not eg.

“Please pass this on to the person who conducts Freedom of Information reviews.

I am writing to request an internal review of Department for Work and Pensions's handling of my FOI request 'Work undertaken by Digital Colleagues in 2020 to look at emergency payment to legacy benefits recipients'.

Thank you for your reply but I am not sure I understand it. You have drawn a distinction between one-off payments and emergency payments. My understanding is that you have then said that my original request was about emergency payments whereas the additional piece of work undertaken by Digital Colleagues and referenced in the email I quoted in my original request was relating to one-off payments, not emergency payments.

If this is the case, the information I am interested in is that piece of work undertaken by Digital Colleagues around one-off payments. The phrase 'emergency payments' was only used in my original request as that was the way they had been referred to by the DWP staff member writing that email, but if the work actually undertaken was around the ability to make one-off payments then please could you release that information as that is what was being referred to in the quote I included in my original email.”

DWP Response

In response to your internal review request, we can confirm that the handling of your original request and response has now been appropriately reviewed by someone unconnected with the handling of your original request.

We find that the original decision was not correct and as such your complaint is upheld. The information that you request is therefore provided in the email with this letter. The reason behind this decision is as follows:-

We have reviewed the email (26 March.pdf) which is attached to the email with this letter. The email refers to work being undertaken to “look at what options there are to make emergency payments quickly to customers not receiving UC”. DWP did not subsequently build a service to make emergency payments outside of UC and so Equality Impact Assessments, etc were never completed.

DWP did however undertake some speculative technical feasibility work to understand how we might be able to deliver emergency payments digitally if we were asked to do so, as part of covid response activity.

The minutes which are attached are from a board meeting where the decision to start this activity was undertaken. We are unable to provide you with some of the information contained within the minutes document as it constitutes personal data of someone other than yourself and as such, it is being withheld in accordance with section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 40(2) exempts information in response to a request if it is personal data belonging to an individual other than the requester and it satisfies one of the conditions listed in the legislation. In this case the condition contained in section 40(3A)(a) applies - that disclosure would breach one of the data protection principles, specifically that “Personal data shall be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner...”.

We do not consider that disclosing this information is necessary or justified in order to satisfy your information request and the requirements of the FoI Act. In relation to this request, we consider that there is no strong legitimate interest that would override the prejudice to the rights and freedoms of the data subject. We have therefore redacted this information from the documents.

Personal data are subject to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018

This work was however never progressed beyond early feasibility as no decision was made which required it and so no further documentation exists.

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

Yours sincerely,
Central FoI Team
Department for Work and Pensions

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

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 FOI and EIR complaints](#) or telephone 0303 123 1113