

Freedom of Information request 2087/2013

Received 04 May
Published

Information request

In light of the imposition of mandatory reconsiderations (MR) for DWP administered benefits and the all too frequent response from the DWP to FOIA requests of “that information is not collected” or “that information is not held centrally and it would cost more than £600 to collect and publish it” has the DWP decided what information it will be gathering for this new process?

- If it has decided what information about MR it intends to gather please tell me what it is?

- If it has not decided what information about MR it intends to gather when will this decision be made?

- If it does not intend to gather specific information about MR how does it intend to: - monitor the effectiveness of the new process? - ensure that errors and issues identified by MR are fed back into the overall benefit process to prevent the same mistakes occurring again?

If the DWP intends to hide behind ‘future publication’ or ‘developing policy’ then please provide relevant timescales as to when these activities will be completed. If the DWP is unable or unwilling to provide such timescales I will regard it as failing to comply with the FOIA and refer the matter to the ICO.

DWP response

DWP has identified data that will be collected in relation to Mandatory Reconsideration, as follows:

- Number of Mandatory Reconsiderations requested;
- Number of Mandatory Reconsiderations requested following request for statement of reasons;
- Whether Mandatory Reconsiderations requested by phone, letter, form or digitally;
- Number of cases where new evidence received with Mandatory Reconsideration;
- Number of cases where Decision Maker telephones claimant for new evidence;
- Number of cases where Decision Maker requests advice from Assessment Provider;
- Number of case cleared in % of days – actual percentage figure will be proposed at a later date;
- Number of Mandatory Reconsiderations revised favourably/unfavourably or no change to decision; and

- Total number of Mandatory Reconsiderations made.

All this information is being gathered in order to monitor the effectiveness of this new process.

At the Mandatory Reconsideration stage, Decision Makers will focus on all the facts of the original decision under dispute, gathering any further information that is required to support the claimant's dispute, and contacting them to address any further issues and explain the decision fully.

If, at the Mandatory Reconsideration stage, errors in the original decision are identified this will be fed back to the original decision maker for training and development purposes, to prevent the error occurring again.

Options are currently being considered around commissioning claimant insight activity following implementation of the changes for other DWP administered benefits and child maintenance cases in October 2013.