

Freedom of Information request 2497/2014

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Information request

You do confirm that you hold the information requested and you also, in a freedom of information request Ref: VTR IR145 you say the administration of Mandatory Reconsideration is centralised. Can you please inform me how long MANDATORY RECONSIDERATION'S are taking on average from data you have in the "CENTRALISED LOCATION". By that I mean no particular town/city/area but as a whole

DWP response

In response to your request, I can confirm that the handling of your original request and the subsequent review have now been appropriately reviewed. As a result of this review I can advise that I find the responses to be accurate. That said, so that there is no ambiguity in our position on this issue, I have reproduced, below, the answer given by Ministers to a recent Parliamentary Question on this issue - Hansard reference 9 June 2014 Col 46W:

"The Department is collecting information to understand how the introduction of mandatory reconsideration is operating, including completion timescales. However, this data is not sufficiently robust and reliable to make available.

In the production of new statistics, which all the above would be, the Department works to guidelines set by the UK Statistics Authority to ensure we are able to publish statistics that meet the high quality standards expected. Departmental statisticians need to assure themselves of the quality of administrative data sources before releasing information as Official statistics, and before the exact timing and format of statistics can be confirmed."

Therefore, I can confirm that the Department holds the information you are seeking. However, Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) applies in this case and exempts this information from disclosure. Section 22 of the FOIA states that information is exempt if, information is intended for publication at a future date.

This exemption requires the public interest for and against disclosure to be weighed in the balance. There is a public interest in information being released as soon as possible. However, I am satisfied that there is a strong public interest in permitting public authorities to publish information in a manner and form and at a time of their own choosing. It is a part of the

effective conduct of public affairs that the general publication of information is a conveniently planned and managed activity within the reasonable control of public authorities I am satisfied that in the instance the Department has a reasonable entitlement to make its own arrangements to do so.