

# Freedom of Information request IR60/2014

Received 7 February 2014

Published

## Information request

I am writing to request an internal review of Department for Work and Pensions' handling of my FOI request 'PIP applications under special rules'. The statistics release strategy you refer to in your refusal of my request explicitly states that a spring 2014 release "will not incorporate process information such as clearance times, disallowance rates, or provider performance" and so is not intended for publication (at least, not as part of this release). If this has changed, please let me know when DWP is planning to publish these data on clearance times - assuming publication is now imminent, I will be happy to drop this request.

However, if there are no imminent publication plans, I would argue that there is a public interest in timely publication to allow appropriate assessment of DWP policy. This interest is especially strong as - back in November - DWP was publicly criticising an alleged lack of robust statistics in Macmillan's criticisms of the policy: if the DWP has better statistics which have a bearing on this matter, they should be put in the public domain for scrutiny.

I would also note that Mike Penning (Minister for Disabled People) stated in December that he was "asking for data on [clearance times], and I do not see any reason why we could not supply the Committee on that"

(<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/WrittenEvidence.svc/EvidenceHtml/4382>). Under such circumstances, I do not see any reason why these data should not also be published. Penning states that his "size 10 boot" is going to be used to exert pressure to achieve faster clearance - if data are robust enough to enable this type of action, they should also be robust enough for publication.

A full history of my FOI request and all correspondence is available on the Internet at this address:

[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/pip\\_applications\\_under\\_special\\_r](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/pip_applications_under_special_r)

## DWP response

You have previously been advised in the response to your original Freedom of Information request (FOI5641) that the Department is working to guidelines

set by the UK Statistics Authority to ensure we are able to publish statistics that meet high quality standards at the earliest opportunity. The response made it clear that it is important that any data released by the Department is robust and reliable and has been fully quality assured by our Departmental analysts, especially given that the PIP data is being collected via a new computer system.

In order to manage the gap between Personal Independence Payment go-live and the first release of Official Statistics in Spring 2014, we are assessing whether we can release some information by early 2014. If the quality assurance of this information shows that it is sufficiently robust and reliable then we aim to pre-announce and publish it via ad-hoc statistical releases.

An ad-hoc release of PIP management information was published on Tuesday 11th February 2014. This covers volumes of PIP new claims registered and decisions made between April 2013 and December 2013, and the award rates for decisions made. Breakdowns for new claims not made under the Special Rules for Terminally Ill people and new claims made under the Special Rules for Terminally Ill people are given.

The release can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ad-hocstatistical-analysis-2014-quarter-1>

We are still assessing the quality of clearance times data. As stated in our previous response it is clearly in the public interest to ensure that publication of PIP statistics is a properly planned and managed process to ensure that the statistics are accurate, robust and comprehensive. It is also in the public interest to ensure that this information is available to all members of the public at the same time.

I have therefore reviewed your request again with regard to Section 22 (Information intended for future publication) of the Freedom of Information Act and I am satisfied that the exemption under Section 22 of the Act applies to the information.