

Freedom of Information request 2654/2014

Received 18 June 2014

Published

Information request

I would like to know how many decisions are overturned by decision making bodies following a mandatory reconsideration of individual cases applying for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

I would like these figures to solely relate to the North East of England.

DWP response

First, I can confirm that the Department holds the information you are seeking. However, Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act exempts this information from disclosure. This is because the 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.

Further, and 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.”