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Operations FOI Team
Caxton House
Tothill Street
LONDON
SW1H 9NA

12 May 2016

www.gov.uk

Our Ref: FOI 4551

Dear Mr [redacted],

I refer to the decision of the First-Tier Tribunal on 12 April 2016, and now provide redacted copies of the 49 Peer Reviews requested by you in your original Freedom of Information request, dated 13 October 2014.

DWP takes its responsibilities to vulnerable people very seriously and has put in place clear processes to help our staff identify vulnerability and provide the best possible service for them.

A Peer Review was a tool for staff to look the handling of a specific case. Its purpose was to scrutinize the department's handling of particular cases to identify whether processes have been properly followed and if appropriate, identify recommendations for changes to the process.

DWP provides substantial and specific instructions to staff on how to support vulnerable people throughout their benefit journey.

When dealing with vulnerable people, both providers and DWP have procedures in place to take appropriate supportive action, which are regularly reviewed.

We have also established a nationally available 'vulnerability hub'. This provides help and advice for staff in dealing with these individuals and signposts to a range of resources that provide advice about specific conditions or circumstances.

With direct relevance to self-harm, DWP has a national 'Six Point Plan' which offers a clear process outlining what staff should do in these circumstances. Regular reminders are sent out – most recently in April this year – reiterating to offices the importance of having plans in place and reviewing them regularly.

DWP spends around £94bn a year on working age benefits to provide a safety net for some of the most vulnerable people in society. The well-being of people using our

services is of the utmost importance, and the department takes strong actions to improve support and guidance for staff on how best to support vulnerable people.

The Peer Reviews have been redacted in line with the guidance provided by the First Tier Tribunal in relation to what information can lawfully be disclosed – in particular, we have paid close attention to the table provided at paragraph 49 of the judgment (annexed to this letter for ease of reference). Any information which is about a particular person has been redacted but, for example, recommendations have been disclosed to the extent that they are not so specific as to reveal something about the individual.

Copies of this letter and the redacted Peer Review Reports will be sent to the Information Commissioner and the Tribunal.

The cases are attached in this E Mail, but are also available to view on Gov.uk.

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

Yours sincerely

DWP Operations FOI Team

Annex 1

UNPROHIBITED	PROHIBITED
Title page ⁴	Names and details of individuals
Guidance and Notes for Peer Review authors	
Peer Review – purpose and methodology	<p>Name and details of individual subject of the review.</p> <p>In cases where disclosure of the name of the commissioning body could enable identification of the person the subject of the review, the name of the commissioning body.</p>
Focus of Peer Review – heading only	Focus of Peer Review - contents
Background – heading only	Background – contents
Summary of findings/lessons learnt – in most reviews, heading only	Summary of findings/lessons learnt – in most reviews, contents
Recommendations for Local consideration – heading, and contents which are not about the individual	<p>Information within the Recommendations for Local consideration which is about the individual</p> <p>Information which could enable identification of the individual</p>
Recommendations for National Customer Journeys – all, except anything which is of a specific nature which would reveal something about the individual	See left column
Timetable of events – heading only	Timetable of events – all contents
	Annexes - all
Footer to each page, except customer name	Customer name in footer to each page

⁴ The title page may also contain the name of one or more persons who carried out or approved the review. These should be either left in or redacted as appropriate in accordance with the usual policies for applying FOIA s40 to personal data of public servants. (The identity of the office at which the reviewer was based is not caught by the s123 prohibition, because it does not indicate the region where the customer resided or was dealt with, and so is not relevant to identification of the customer.)