



Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

18 October 2023

Dear Sir Stephen,

Thank you for your letter of 15th September 2023 requesting information about the Department's Internal Process Reviews (IPR) procedure. This is to support the Committee's recent inquiry into *Safeguarding Vulnerable Claimants*. You asked for the following:

1. *The number of IPRs that have been started in each year since IPRs were introduced:*
 - a. *Relating to customer death.*
 - b. *Relating to customer harm.*

2. *The number of IPRs that have been completed in each year since IPRs were introduced:*
 - a. *Relating to customer death.*
 - b. *Relating to customer harm.*

Internal Process Reviews were introduced in October 2015. Following a National Audit Office investigation and report, in February 2020, improvements were made to the recording of data, and this is reflected in the figures given for 2020 onwards. As part of the learning organisation review in late 2019, plans were started to raise the profile of IPRs. This, coupled with the later widening of the range of circumstances where an IPR is carried out, has allowed us to increase the number of cases we have investigated to learn from and make improvements to our processes.

With previous information requested in relation to IPRs covering different time periods, we are keen to bring consistency to information that is released and will be providing information in relation to full operational years (April to March). The details of the number of IPRs started in each full operational year between 2015-16 and 2021-22, and the categorisation applied are provided below:

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Total number of IPRs started	17	27	19	23	59	62	65
Of which were categorised							
Customer Death	15	23	17	19	54	49	47
Customer Harm	2	4	2	4	5	13	18

Notes:

Customer Death includes the categories: death, alleged suicide and confirmed suicide.

Customer Harm includes the categories: self-harm, serious harm, attempted suicide and 'other'.

The number of IPRs started, is calculated based on the date the referral was passed to an investigator to compile the report.

From April 2022, we began reporting on IPR cases from the date they met criteria and were accepted, rather than when they were started. We changed to this way of reporting to provide a clearer view of when IPR cases were received, and closer to the event which has led to consideration of cases for an IPR, which can take time to be fully investigated and completed. The Department has also started publishing information in relation to IPRs for full operational years within its' latest Annual Report and Accounts, and intends to continue to provide information by operational year going forwards.

Accordingly, the IPRs accepted in the 2022-23 operational year are provided below:

IPRs Meeting Criteria	60
Of which were categorised	
Customer Death	50
Customer Harm	10

The information on the number of IPRs completed between the 2015-16 and 2022-23 operational years, together with the categorisation that was applied in relation to Customer Death or Customer Harm, are provided in the table below:

	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Total number of IPRs completed	17	27	19	23	59	40	57	47
Of which were categorised								
Customer Death	15	23	17	19	54	32	39	34
Customer Harm	2	4	2	4	5	8	18	13

Notes:

Customer Death includes the categories: death, alleged suicide and confirmed suicide.

Customer Harm includes the categories: self-harm, serious harm, attempted suicide and 'other'.

I hope the above information provides the clarity you requested as to the volume of Internal Process Reviews started and completed since their inception in 2015. Should you require any additional detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Mel Stride MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions



Work and Pensions Committee

15 September 2023

Mel Stride MP

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
Department for Work and Pensions
(By e-mail only)

Dear Mel,

Information request: Internal Process Reviews (IPRs)

The Committee has recently commenced an inquiry into *Safeguarding Vulnerable Claimants*. As part of this inquiry we intend to examine the Department's Internal Process Review (IPR) procedure. Ministers have previously answered a number of Parliamentary written questions on how many IPRs that have been started and conducted over various time periods. However, there is not a complete set of data on this for every annual period since IPRs were introduced.

Please could you provide the Committee with the following information:

1. The number of IPRs that have been started in each year since IPRs were introduced:
 - a. Relating to customer death.
 - b. Relating to customer harm.
2. The number of IPRs that have been completed in each year since IPRs were introduced:
 - a. Relating to customer death.
 - b. Relating to customer harm.

Please indicate clearly the exact period covered (e.g. January 2020–December 2020) for each set of data and, if possible, please can these periods be coterminous.

I would be grateful for your response to these questions by Wednesday 18 October. As is usual practice with the Committee's correspondence, I will be publishing this letter and your response on the Committee's website.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee

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