

DFSI – Response to P-file message

On 9 March, the DFSI Secretary communicated to staff about the ongoing issue to do with the Department's handling of your personnel files (P-file).

Martin Hoffman's message advised staff are able to request access to their P-file through lodging a service request with GovConnect.

Since that time a number of PSA members have come forward reporting they are continuing to experience difficulty in accessing their basic information.

Some members have alerted the PSA to the fact they have been advised by the Department they will not be allowed access to their P-files due to "confidentiality reasons".

Typically, recent members' attempts to access P-files would look something like this:

- » Contacted HR and was advised to contact GovConnect
- » Contacted GovConnect and was advised it was an HR matter
- » HR advised it could provide the member with a link to enable the member to peruse their file
- » HR later retracted previous advice stating that "due to privacy reasons they could not share by email and unable to provide link".

This is but one small example of what can happen when governments rush to outsource functions provided by the public service. You get a significantly diminished service.

On the face of it appears the Department is still not adhering to the information protection principles in the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* and certainly not the relevant privacy principles contained in the *Personnel Handbook* which provide openness and full accessibility for employees.

When a government agency is unable to carry out basic requests from staff to access their own personnel files – isn't it time for the Secretary to tell the Minister that it ain't working – and all services to do with public sector employees need to be brought back onshore and in-house?

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