

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Our Ref: VTR 4543

11 October 2013

Dear Mr Hilton,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 23rd September 2013. You asked:-

I understand that the National Insurance Number (NINO) is in the format "AA NN NN NN A", where A represents a letter and N a number from 0–9.

Could you please provide the following information under the Freedom of Information Act:

- 1. A list of the two-letter combinations ever used as the first two characters of NINOs so far issued to people in the UK.*
- 2. A list of the two-letter combinations ever used as the first two characters of NINOs used for administrative or other special reasons (e.g. "TN", "MW", "PP").*
- 3. A list of the two-letter combinations scheduled to be used as the first two characters of future NINOs for people in the UK.*
- 4. A list of the two-letter combinations scheduled to be used as the first two characters of future NINOs for administrative or other special reasons.*
- 5. A list of letters ever used as the final (9th) character of NINOs.*
- 6. The reasons why "GB", "BG", "NK", "KN", "NT", and "ZZ" cannot be used as the first two characters of a NINO.*
- 7. The reasons why "F", "M", and "P" were used as the final (9th) character of NINOs.*

Could you also answer the following questions:

1. Is it true that the numbers (the 3rd–8th characters) of NINOs are allocated consecutively from "000000" to "999999"? (And if not, how are they allocated? And from what starting number does the allocation begin? And at which number does it end?)

2. Do any of the characters of NINOs act as a "check digit" by which the validity of the NINO can be verified (using the otherz constituent characters of the NINO)?

DWP Response:

I can confirm that the format of the National Insurance number (NINo) is as you have described above.

With regard to questions 1 and 3:

1. A list of the two-letter combinations ever used as the first two characters of NINOs so far issued to people in the UK.

3. A list of the two-letter combinations scheduled to be used as the first two characters of future NINOs for people in the UK.

The list of the two letter combinations used and scheduled to be used are detailed below. This information is provided by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to assist employers in administrating payroll. It is available in the "Quality Standard and Business Validation Specification From April 2011" on the HMRC website:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ebu/qual_stand_11.pdf

National Insurance Number Prefixes

AA, AB, AE, AH, AK, AL, AM, AP, AR, AS, AT, AW, AX, AY, AZ
BA, BB, BE, BH, BK, BL, BM, BT
CA, CB, CE, CH, CK, CL, CR
EA, EB, EE, EH, EK, EL, EM, EP, ER, ES, ET, EW, EX, EY, EZ
GY
HA, HB, HE, HH, HK, HL, HM, HP, HR, HS, HT, HW, HX, HY, HZ
JA, JB, JC, JE, JG, JH, JJ, JK, JL, JM, JN, JP, JR, JS, JT, JW, JX, JY, JZ
KA, KB, KE, KH, KK, KL, KM, KP, KR, KS, KT, KW, KX, KY, KZ
LA, LB, LE, LH, LK, LL, LM, LP, LR, LS, LT, LW, LX, LY, LZ
MA, MW, MX
NA, NB, NE, NH, NL, NM, NP, NR, NS, NW, NX, NY, NZ
OA, OB, OE, OH, OK, OL, OM, OP, OR, OS, OX
PA, PB, PC, PE, PG, PH, PJ, PK, PL, PM, PN, PP, PR, PS, PT, PW, PX, PY
RA, RB, RE, RH, RK, RM, RP, RR, RS, RT, RW, RX, RY, RZ
SA, SB, SC, SE, SG, SH, SJ, SK, SL, SM, SN, SP, SR, SS, ST, SW, SX, SY, SZ
TA, TB, TE, TH, TK, TL, TM, TP, TR, TS, TT, TW, TX, TY, TZ
WA, WB, WE, WK, WL, WM, WP
YA, YB, YE, YH, YK, YL, YM, YP, YR, YS, YT, YW, YX, YY, YZ
ZA, ZB, ZE, ZH, ZK, ZL, ZM, ZP, ZR, ZS, ZT, ZW, ZX, ZY

The characters D, F, I, Q, U and V are not used as either the first or second letter of a NINO prefix.

With regard to questions 2, 4 and 7:

2: *A list of the two-letter combinations ever used as the first two characters of NINOs used for administrative or other special reasons (e.g. "TN", "MW", "PP").*

4: *A list of two-letter combinations scheduled to be used as the first two characters of future NINOs for administrative or other special reasons.*

7: *The reasons why "F", "M", and "P" were used as the final (9th) character of NINOs.*

A temporary or administrative number is not a NINO. Historically, when employers or Pension Providers did not know and employee's or pensioner's NINO they used to construct a number usually starting with TN (temporary number) the individual's date of birth followed by gender M/F (or P for pensioner) for example TN010160M. This was not a unique identifier as two individuals with the same date of birth and gender would have the same temporary administrative number. Employers were instructed to cease this practice from April 2001. Further details of the use of temporary reference or administrative numbers can be found at the HMRC website: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/nimmanual/nim39110.htm>

There is no intention to use any other first two characters for temporary or administrative reference numbers.

6: *The reasons why "GB", "BG", "NK", "KN", "NT", and "ZZ" cannot be used as the first two characters of a NINO.*

These prefixes are not used because of risks of confusion or error.

1: *Is it true that the numbers (the 3rd–8th characters) of NINOs are allocated consecutively from "000000" to "999999"? (And if not, how are they allocated? And from what starting number does the allocation begin? And at which number does it end?)*

Yes it is correct that the NINO is allocated consecutively 000000 – 999999.

2: *Do any of the characters of NINOs act as a "check digit" by which the validity of the NINO can be verified (using the otherz constituent characters of the NINO)?*

There are no characters of the NINO that act as a check digit.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central FoI Team

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central FOI Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF www.ico.gov.uk