

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: VTR 282

04.02.2014

Dear Mr Ablett,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 19 January 2014. You asked:-

- 1) Could you please provide any up-to-date documents (as in, still currently applicable at today's date of 19/01/14) regarding the complaints procedure for Jobcentre Plus.*
- 2) Could you also provide any up-to-date documents detailing how Jobcentre Plus staff should treat customers.*
- 3) Could you please provide information on how many Jobcentre Plus staff have been dismissed following a complaint made against them personally and how many have been dismissed following a complaint made against the service. If any, could you break this down into figures per year, from 2010 - 2014, clarifying whether the dismissal was as a result of a direct complaint against a staff member or not.*
- 4) Finally, could you please provide the total amount of complaints made against Jobcentre Plus for the same period, 2010 - 2014, broken down into figures per year, and if you have the information, whether the complaints were made against staff or Jobcentre Plus in general.*

In response to your first question, Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act allows us to direct you to information which is already reasonably accessible to you. The information you requested is available on the gov.uk website. I have attached the link [here](#).

Section 21 is also appropriate in response to your second question. Jobcentre Plus is part of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and as such, complies with the DWP Customer Charter. This, too, can be found on the gov.uk website, and again, I attach the link [here](#).

In response to your third question, whilst Jobcentre Plus remains the branding of the Department's frontline face to face service, the executive agency status of Jobcentre Plus ended during 2011-12 as DWP integrated its frontline agencies into one operation. This means information for Jobcentre Plus as an agency only exists between 01 January 2010 and 31 October 2011.

During this period 641 individuals were dismissed for disciplinary reasons. Our systems do not record the circumstances of the incident(s) that led to the dismissal. The circumstances may be held in personnel files; however accessing these would require a manual trawl of clerically

held records which would incur disproportionate costs. A breakdown of this calculation is shown in the table below.

Cost of retrieval of each file = £5	641 files x £5 = £3,205
Hourly rate for searching files for disciplinary circumstances	10 minutes a file = 6 an hour 106 hours to search all 641 files £25 an hour rate x 106 hours = £2,650
Total Cost	£3,205 + £2,650 = £5,855

The appropriate limit has been specified in regulations, and for central Government it is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act the Department is not obliged to comply with your request and we are unable to process your request further as it would take us longer than the estimated cost time to retrieve this information for you.

Finally, in response to your fourth question, the figures provided below will give you an indication of complaints made against Jobcentre Plus overall, and Jobcentre Plus complaints made that fall under the DWP Customer Charter category of 'DWP Staff Don't Treat Me With Respect'.

Please also note the DWP reporting year is from April to March, not January to December.

Reporting Year	Jobcentre Plus Complaints received Overall	Jobcentre Plus Complaints recorded under 'Staff do not treat me with respect'
2010 - 2011	58,865	7,616
2011 – 2012	59,677	8,979
2012 – 2013	67,982	13,709
2013 -2014 (to end Dec 2013)	38,301	11,611

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol 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 Fol 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