

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: [freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

Our Ref: Fol 3665

DATE: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017

Dear Mr Slater,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 4 September 2017. You asked:

*Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs ("HMRC") real-time information system ("RTI") is essential for Universal Credit ("UC") to operate correctly. It has been widely reported that the DWP and the HMRC work closely together to identify and resolve any problems with the RTI.*

*It is reasonable to assume that there is a formal process by which the DWP notify HMRC of any problems (sometimes known as incident reports or bug reports within the IT sector) that it is experiencing with the RFI. It is also reasonable to assume that there is a process for HMRC to notify the DWP of the same.*

*The Department will note the Information Commissioner's guidance on interpreting requests as widely as possible. Therefore if the method of communicating the type of problems described is not known as incident reporting that does not allow the Department to state that it does not hold the requested information.*

*RFI1 – Please disclose all incident reports submitted by the DWP to HMRC in the previous 12 months in respect of the RTI system (e.g. bugs, faults, performance issues, inaccuracies in the data etc).*

*RFI2 – Please disclose all incident reports or problems related to the RTI submitted by HMRC to the DWP in the previous 12 months in (e.g. bugs, faults, performance issues, inaccuracies in the data etc).*

*RFI3 – Please disclose the approach employed by the DWP and HMRC to collaborate on the RTI system. For example there may be a joint steering committee or it could be a specific item discussed at UC programme board meetings. Please explain how the work of any such group/team (e.g. decisions, actions etc) are recorded.*

You are correct that Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Real Time Information (RTI) system is essential to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Universal Credit (UC) programme, to ensure UC payments are calculated accurately with the most up to date claimant earnings information. The RTI system is owned by HMRC and is independent to DWP's Real Time Earnings (RTE) system which is used to receive and process HMRC RTI.

I will address your questions as raised:

RFI1: There are no incident reports submitted by DWP to HMRC for RTI.

RFI2: There are no incident reports submitted by HMRC to DWP for RTI.

RFI3: DWP has several formal and informal groups to collaborate with HMRC and discuss RTI as and when required, for example when mutual Annual Upgrading of the two systems is required, a Change Request is issued between the two departments and collaboration takes place between the technical departments to implement the change.

The Programme Board brings DWP and HMRC together for Universal Credit as a whole, however, RTI incidents and fixes do not feature as each Department manages their own incidents and fixes on RTI and RTE respectively.

The Late, Missing and Incorrect RTI Project is a joint initiative between HMRC and DWP to improve the flow, timeliness and accuracy of Employee submissions to HMRC and subsequent onward transmission to DWP. This project does not address system defects in RTI but does address inaccuracies in the submitted RTI data. The main focus of this initiative is to ensure Employers submit accurate earnings information on time.

Finally, the HMRC and DWP Jointly Managed Engagement Team will look at individual cases where a claimant has disputed their UC award and the RTI data is investigated on a case by case basis. This may involve HMRC contacting the Employer to ensure the correct payment information was submitted or to ensure it is submitted on time.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Strategy Freedom of Information Team

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**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](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk) or by writing to DWP, Central FoI Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, 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](http://www.ico.gov.uk)