

**Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)  
Central Freedom of Information Team**

freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

**Our reference:** Fol 2704

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Dear Mr Breyal

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2018. You asked for information pertaining to the National Insurance Number. Specifically the questions as listed below:

(1) Please can you confirm that the following is the only format that a National Insurance Number (NINO) can currently take: "XX YY YY YY X" where X is a character and Y is a number?

(2) Are there any restrictions on the values that each element within a NINO can take and if so what are these?

(3) A list of the two-letter combinations ever used as the first two characters in a NINO.

(4) A list of the letters that have ever been used as the final character in a NINO.

(5) Are there any plans to change the format of the NINO in the future?

(6) A list of the two-letter combinations scheduled to be used as the first two characters of future NINOs.

(7) A list of the letters scheduled to be used as the final character of future NINOs.

(8) A list detailing the meaning of the different elements that make up a NINO.

(9) Do any of the characters in NINOs act as a check by which the validity of the NINO can be verified? If so, how is this achieved?

## **DWP Response:**

1) The National Insurance Number (NINo) is made up of 3 components in the format AAnnnnnnA. The 3 components are the Prefix, Numeric body and Suffix.

2) The Numeric body is the 6 numeric characters of the NINo and will be numeric in the range 000000 – 999999.

The Prefix is the first two alpha characters, validated as follows:

- The prefix cannot be either a BG, GB, NK, KN, TN, NT or ZZ
- The prefix cannot contain either a D, F, I, Q, U or V
- The second character of the NINo prefix must not be an O

3) I can confirm that the list of used NINo prefixes is no longer maintained, however, the most recent list produced by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs can be accessed via:

Appendix 2 of the *Quality Standard and Business Validation Specification* available at

[http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140109143644/http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ebu/qual\\_stand\\_11.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140109143644/http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ebu/qual_stand_11.pdf)

4) The Suffix is the final alpha character and will be in the range A – D.

5) The Department has no future plans to change the format of the NINo.

6) Future prefixes are selected as and when required and as such cannot be confirmed. However any unused prefix meeting the validation rules, as above, can potentially be selected for use.

7) Please see the answer to question 4.

8) Please see the answers to questions 1, 2 and 4.

9) No meaning or significance is given to any element of the NINo, therefore it has no characters that could act as a check to verify its validity.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central FoI 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.org.uk/Global/contact\\_us](http://www.ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us) or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745