



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

DWP Central Freedom of  
Information Team  
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[freedom-of-information-  
request@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk)

[DWP Website](#)

Our Ref: FOI2023/06010

27 January 2023

Dear Michelle Watts,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 23 January. You wrote:

“Thank you for your response of 11 January 2023.

You stated: "If you were simply to request the number of people prosecuted for fraud relating to undeclared capital within a given period, we may be able to provide you with an answer, although I cannot guarantee that this would be the case"

I would like you to provide information regarding the number of people prosecuted for fraud relating to undeclared capital in the previous 12-month period.

A full history of my FOI request and all correspondence is available on the Internet at this address: [https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/universal\\_credit\\_fraud](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/universal_credit_fraud)”

## **DWP Response**

We confirm that we do hold the information you have requested.

I can confirm that 24 cases were prosecuted in 2022, where the primary benefit in payment was Universal Credit and the offence type was undeclared/excess capital.

This figure may include cases where other offences were also listed and/or where the capital held was in the form of undeclared property.

Note that we redeployed some investigators during the pandemic to help pay benefit to people who needed our help during this difficult time. It was also the case that we were unable to interview people face to face (due to government restrictions) which is a pre-requisite for any prosecution. We are now up to date with Investigations, but it can take 6 to 18 months before a case is heard in court.

Outside of the Freedom of Information Act, you may be interested in reading more about DWP's plans to fight fraud in the benefit system, which were published in May 2022 and can be found at [Fighting Fraud in the Welfare System - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fighting-fraud-in-the-welfare-system)

These plans include proposals to seek new powers to enable the Department to better detect undeclared capital, by means of enhanced access to third party data.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team  
Department for Work and Pensions

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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@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk) or by writing to: DWP Central FoI Team, Caxton House, 6-12 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.

Website: [ICO FOI and EIR complaints](#) or telephone 0303 123 1113.