

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

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

Our reference: Fol VTR 2085

Date: 13 June 2017

Dear Isabel Togoh.

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 15 May 2017.
You asked:

- 1. The total number of complaints made to the Department for Work and Pensions about mistakes made by the DWP and organisations that provide its services, e.g. Jobcentre Plus;*
- 2. Details of the nature of each mistake, for example, somebody being wrongly declared "fit for work";*
- 3. According to your complaints procedure, how many of these mistakes have resulted in a compensatory payout or "special payment", as stated on your complaints procedure website?*
- 4. What does a "special payment" consist of? Please could you provide a breakdown of individual payouts and, where applicable, the nature of the compensation (i.e. value, whether they are monetary and/or in kind), alongside the mistake.*

DWP Response

Questions 1 & 2.

We do not record information to the granular levels requested such as wrongly declared "fit for work". However, we can supply the number of complaints received recorded against the category "You've got it wrong": -

DWP Benefits	April-December 2014	2015	2016	January-March 2017
Number of elements recorded against the root cause category "You've got it wrong" *	11092	13834	13537	5637

Please note that the above volumes include information about complaints relating to all DWP Benefits (Working Age, Pensions and Disability), at both stages of the DWP complaints process (Resolution and Review stage; Review data is available from September 2015 only).

*“You’ve got it wrong” includes a range of sub-categories, for example, “You were wrong about my entitlement”, “You didn’t record my changes/personal info correctly”, “You paid me the wrong amount” and “You got your entitlement/sanction decision wrong”.

Questions 3 & 4.

I can confirm that DWP holds information falling within the description specified in your request but we do not routinely collect the information you have requested. We would need to check complaints records on the feedback handler by ‘type of complaint’ and align these with records on Special Payments made for the same individual. We estimate that the cost of complying with your request would **exceed the appropriate limit for central Government, set by regulations 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 it. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act the Department is not therefore obliged to comply with this part of your request and we will not be processing it further.

DWP's policy and guiding principles for the special payment scheme ‘Financial Redress for Maladministration’ is published on Gov.uk. You can access this document via the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/compensation-for-poor-service-a-guide-for-dwp-staff>

Whilst we are unable to provide a breakdown of individual awards as requested, the Department does maintain statistics on the total number and amount of special payments made to people who have incurred additional costs, losses or other effects due to our maladministration. This information is published annually in the DWP Annual Report and Accounts on the Gov.uk website. I have included a link to the most recent report published:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-annual-report-and-accounts-2015-to-2016>

You can find details of a number of individual cases in the Independent Case Examiner’s Annual Report which is published on Gov.UK. Previous years reports can be accessed via the link below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?departments%5B%5D=independent-case-examiner&publication_type=corporate-reports

Under section 16 of the Act we should help you narrow your request so that it may fall beneath the cost limit.

Once you have reviewed the material mentioned above you may want to refine your request

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, 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 or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745