

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: [freedom-of-information-xxxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx](mailto:freedom-of-information-xxxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx)

Our Ref: VTR2654

9 August 2012

Dear J Colton

Thank you for your Freedom of Information dated on 05 July 2012. You asked:

*The BBC "Crimestoppers" programme recently ran a TV campaign in association with and sanctioned and funded by DWP to highlight and publicise frauds against DWP.*

*Can you provide an "anonymised" list of all instances reported by members of the public during/after this campaign and the outcome of any/all investigations identified by the programme?*

*I am sure that the BBC have supplied you with this information, and you would have acted upon it and used the results to broadcast how much money was saved/recovered as a result, otherwise the campaign would have been an expensive failure.*

*By "anonymised", I mean for you to leave out personal/identifiable detail of persons names etc so that you do not refuse this request on the grounds of releasing personal information.*

We are unable to provide the information you have requested because we are not aware of any TV campaigns that were run by the BBC Crimestoppers programme in association with and funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

However, we can confirm that on the 5th December 2011, the DWP engaged in a three month trial with Crimestoppers which ended on the 4th March 2012. Crimestoppers generated local fraud publicity through their network of volunteers and online advertising on their website, facebook and twitter.

4,152 instances of fraud were reported by members of the public and sent to DWP for consideration of an investigation by the Department's Fraud Investigation Service (FIS). Of these:

- 2,261 fraud referrals were routed to FIS for criminal investigation.

- 1,819 referrals were routed to DWP's Customer Compliance (CC) who are responsible for dealing with lower risk cases where full criminal investigation is judged unnecessary, enabling FIS to focus on higher risk frauds. CC may regularise the benefit payment if necessary and seek recovery of an overpayment whilst ensuring the customer is made aware of the rules of claiming benefits.

We are unable to provide you with an anonymised list of these instances of fraud reported by members of the public as we estimate that the cost of complying with this request would exceed the appropriate limit of £600. 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 3.5 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 will not be processing this part of your request further.

Of the 2,261 referrals routed to FIS, 1,162 have resulted in no evidence of fraud being found at an early stage and the investigations have been closed. One case has resulted in a prosecution and the remainder of the referrals are still under investigation.

This information is derived from operational processes and systems designed solely for the purposes of helping the Department to manage its business. As it was never the Department's intention to put this information into the public domain, it has not been subjected to the rigorous quality assurance checks applied to our published official statistics. As the DWP holds the information, we have released it. However, it is possible information held by the case management system may change due to operational reasons and we recommend that caution be applied when using it.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol 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@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.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.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)