



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team  
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[DWP Website](#)

Our Ref: See ref numbers below

29 September 2023

Dear Emily Silcock,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Foi) requests received on 4, 5, 6, 8 and 11 September. The reference numbers and an example of what you wrote is below:

Housing Benefit (HB) daily applications for 2020, 2021 2022 (3 requests)

**FOI2023/67708, FOI2023/67709, FOI2023/67713**

“Could I please have the exact same data as FOI2023 38880, but for 2022 instead of 2019?

Link to FOI2023 38880:

[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/daily\\_number\\_of\\_applications\\_for\\_4#incoming-2336171](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/daily_number_of_applications_for_4#incoming-2336171)”

Universal Credit (UC) daily applications 2020, 2021, 2022 (3 requests)

**FOI2023/67701, FOI2023/67704, FOI2023/67706**

“I would like to request the number of applications made for Universal Credit, at a daily level, for each day in 2022.

To be clear, I would like the total number for each day separately, so a sample dataset could have every date in 2022 in the first column and the applications in the second column. The date should be the date that the initial application was made, not the date of the decision - and I would like all applications, whether or not they were successful.”

UC daily applications 2013 to 2022 – England (11 requests)

**FOI2023/68188, FOI2023/68192, FOI2023/68193, FOI2023/68199, FOI2023/68201, FOI2023/68203, FOI2023/68205, FOI2023/68206, FOI2023/68208, FOI2023/68483, FOI2023/68485**

“I would like to request the number of applications made for Universal Credit, at a daily level, for each day in 2020, only including those applications that were made in England.

To be clear, I would like the total number for each day separately, so a sample dataset could have every date in 2020 in the first column and the applications in the second column. The date should be the date that the initial application was made, not the date of the decision - and I would like all applications, whether or not they were successful.”

HB daily applications 2010 to 2021 – England (12 requests)

**FOI2023/69015, FOI2023/69017, FOI2023/69020, FOI2023/69023, FOI2023/69036, FOI2023/69044, FOI2023/69051, FOI2023/69052, FOI2023/69472, FOI2023/69474, FOI2023/69476, FOI2023/69478**

“I would like to request the number of applications made for Housing Benefit, at a daily level, for each day in 2020, only including those applications that were made in England.

To be clear, I would like the total number for each day separately, so a sample dataset could have every date in 2020 in the first column and the applications in the second column. The date should be the date that the initial application was made, not the date of the decision - and I would like all applications, whether or not they were successful.”

## **DWP Response**

We can confirm that we hold the information falling within the description specified in your request.

Section 12(4) of the FoI Act and also the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 provides that requests can be aggregated for the purpose of estimating whether the cost limit applies, providing they relate to any extent to the same or similar information and the requests are received from the same individual or different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign.

This is where more than one request has been made within 60 consecutive working days relating to the same or similar information and the requests have been made by the same person. This includes adding to the estimated costs of complying with a later request, the cost of complying with a request that has already been answered. We have therefore aggregated the following requests under this provision:

Housing Benefit (HB) daily applications 2010 to 2022 (not including 2019) (12 requests)  
**FOI2023/51556, FOI2023/51558, FOI2023/51565, FOI2023/51571, FOI2023/51574, FOI2023/51576, FOI2023/59338, FOI2023/59343, FOI2023/59351, FOI2023/67708, FOI2023/67709, FOI2023/67713**

Universal Credit (UC) daily applications 2020, 2021, 2022 (3 requests)  
**FOI2023/67701, FOI2023/67704, FOI2023/67706**

UC daily applications 2013 to 2022 – England (11 requests)  
**FOI2023/68188, FOI2023/68192, FOI2023/68193, FOI2023/68199, FOI2023/68201, FOI2023/68203, FOI2023/68205, FOI2023/68206, FOI2023/68208, FOI2023/68483, FOI2023/68485**

HB daily applications 2010 to 2021 – England (12 requests)  
**FOI2023/69015, FOI2023/69017, FOI2023/69020, FOI2023/69023, FOI2023/69036, FOI2023/69044, FOI2023/69051, FOI2023/69052, FOI2023/69472, FOI2023/69474, FOI2023/69476, FOI2023/69478**

We estimate that the cost of complying with your aggregated requests would exceed the appropriate limit for central Government, set by regulations at £600. This represents the estimated cost of at least one person spending 3½ working days (equivalent to 24 staff-hours) in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

Under Section 12(4) of the Freedom of Information Act the Department is not therefore obliged to comply with your requests as we have aggregated the cost of processing them together and as such, we will not be processing them any further. The time already spent on providing the information requested, together with the time to provide the newly requested information and then the time to produce additional breakdowns for England grossly exceed the cost limit. For information, the only geography readily available for applications is postcode area or district but as these do not align with country borders, we are unable to breakdown statistics on applications to just England within the cost limit.

Under section 16 of the Fol Act we should help you narrow your requests so that they may fall beneath the cost limit. We will consider afresh any revised request however we cannot guarantee that any revised request will fall within the cost limit.

We feel that you should limit your requests to ask for information on applications in Great Britain. Furthermore, we suggest that in future, instead of submitting multiple individual requests over several months you please submit one request covering all aspects you wish to cover. In this case we suggest you ask for:

1. The number of applications made for Universal Credit in Great Britain, at a daily level, for each day in 2020, 2021 and 2022.
2. The number of applications made for Housing Benefit in Great Britain, at a daily level, for each day in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us quoting the reference numbers 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-reqxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx](mailto:freedom-of-information-reqxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx) or by writing to: DWP Central Fol Team, Caxton House, 6-12 Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA.

Any request for an internal review must be received by us within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please note we are not obliged to provide a review if it is requested after more than 40 working days.

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