



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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Sent by e-mail

Digital Group - Parliamentary Business

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E-mail: [Technology Freedom of Information
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Website: www.dwp.gov.uk

Date: 22 June 2018

Ref No: FOI 2396

Dear Charlie,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 16 May 2018.
You asked for:-

1) What your policy is regarding cookies, other persistent storage and fingerprinting technologies, specifically referring to cookies set by third parties.

Reply

Any DWP digital service must have a cookies policy which clearly explains the use of cookies. Further guidance is published on the GDS website <https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/technology/working-with-cookies-and-similar-technologies>.

The Department for Work and Pensions does not have its own website. It publishes corporate content and most of its guidance on GOV.UK.

In particular:

- a) What instruction do you give to the operators of website services under their purview regarding cookies?*
- b) Is this instruction publicly available online and if not, why not?*

Reply

Most services are developed and maintained by DWP itself. Where services are developed and managed by external organisations, they abide by DWP's approach to use of cookies. In general, no third party cookies are used (Google Analytics cookies are 1st party). Some websites DWP has created to support communication campaigns (for example www.yourpension.gov.uk) use 3rd party cookies to assess the effectiveness of adverts on social media that direct people to the site. For example, where someone visits the site by clicking on an advert, these cookies send information on what pages they viewed back to the ad serving service (for example Google DoubleClick, or Facebook ads). This allows the agency responsible for DWP's digital marketing to ensure the advertising is cost effective. Sites or services using these cookies will have this clearly stated in their individual cookie policies.

We use cookies to measure how people use those websites. We don't use cookies to identify people and we don't share the data we collect through cookies.

2) Whether you use analytics based on cookies or any other persistent storage concerning users of these public website services.

Specifically:

- a) If applicable, what Google Analytics data sharing settings do you use?*
- b) Are your analytics settings, or use of analytics more broadly, publicly available online and if not, why not?*

Reply

DWP uses Google Analytics on most of its digital services, though some services use Speedtrap analytics instead. Google Analytics data is generally not shared outside the Department, though some aggregated data such as completion rates for digital services is publicly available on the performance platform on gov.uk, and in an annual report available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-websites-reporting-on-progress-2016-to-2017>.

Where the Department is paying for advertising, for example Google Adwords, data from Google Analytics is shared with the agency responsible for buying the advertising. This is to enable them to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the advertising.

DWP does not enable the Demographics and Interest Reports in Google Analytics on any of its websites or digital services.

Members of our Digital Performance Analytics team have published several blogs about our use of analytics, including the standard way Google Analytics is implemented on new digital services (available at https://docs.google.com/document/d/12RPZMKaqbn23YxyiVVR388eOtjdPw37JrraRTBkXh_0/edit?usp=sharing).

3) What correspondence or advice you have received from the Information Commissioner's Office concerning cookies. This can be narrowed to a reasonable search for the word "cookie" or "e-privacy" in correspondence between the ICO and your team/department that developed your policy on cookies or the use of cookies. This can be further narrowed down to the timeframe when the policy was under active development.

Reply

The DWP Cookies Policy for DWP digital services was developed using the Information Commissioner's Office guidance for organisations – "Guidance on the rules on use of cookies and similar technologies". DWP did not receive correspondence from the Information Commissioner's office concerning cookies.

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

Yours,

DWP Digital, Parliamentary Business Focal Point

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you can ask for 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 sent within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of an internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The ICO can be contacted at: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745