



Department
for Work &
Pensions

DWP Central Freedom of
Information Team
Caxton House
6-12 Tothill Street
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SW1H 9NA

M Downing
request-924930-e345f308@whatdotheyknow.com

[freedom-of-information-
request@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk)

[DWP Website](#)

Our Ref: FOI2022/95929

14 December 2022

Dear M Downing,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) request received on 30 November. You wrote:

"I would like to request the following information:

- 1) The number of official complaints made to DWP in 2021, by claimants who declared a disability or health condition, which concerned DWP staff bullying, harassing, discriminating against or physically/sexually assaulting the claimant.
- 2) The number of such complaints which led to the disciplinary action of one or more DWP staff members."

DWP Response

We can confirm that we hold some of the information falling within the description specified in your request. However, we have estimated that the cost of meeting your request would exceed the cost limit of £600 specified in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. This represents the estimated cost of 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.

DWP logs complaints under benefit type and has a number of specific categories that focus on identifying broadly where service has failed, for example, "DWP staff don't treat me with respect - You were rude/threatening/abusive towards" or "You discriminated against me because of my disability". It may be under this category that complaints against DWP staff may be recorded.

To know if a complaint relates specifically to claimants who declared a disability or health condition and concerned DWP staff bullying, harassing, discriminating, we would need to look at cases individually.

We do not hold information on the number of DWP staff facing disciplinary action in relation to complaints.

Under Section 12 of the FoI Act the Department is not therefore obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing it further.

In order to comply with Section 16 of the FOI Act and to bring your request within the appropriate cost limit you may wish to limit your request to the category "DWP staff don't treat me with respect" and consider reducing your time frame from April 2021 to March 2022.

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

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 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.