



HM Revenue  
& Customs

Mr John Slater

By email: request-429143-3c9c20f3@whatdotheyknow.com

Freedom of Information Team  
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Date:            5 December 2017

Our ref:        FOI2017/01614

Dear Mr Slater

### **Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**

Thank you for your communication of 18 November regarding your request under the FOIA, on 4 September for the following information:

*Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs ("HMRC") real-time information system ("RTI") is essential for Universal Credit ("UC") to operate correctly. It has been widely reported that the DWP and the HMRC work closely together to identify and resolve any problems with the RTI.*

*It is reasonable to assume that there is a formal process by which the HMRC notify the DWP of any problems (sometimes known as incident reports or bug reports within the IT sector) that it is experiencing with the RTI. It is also reasonable to assume that there is a process for the DWP to notify HMRC of the same.*

*HMRC will note the Information Commissioner's guidance on interpreting requests as widely as possible. Therefore if the method of communicating the type of problems described is not known as incident reporting that does not allow HMRC to state that it does not hold the requested information.*

*RFI1 – Please disclose all incident reports submitted by HMRC to the DWP in the previous 12 months in respect of the RTI system (e.g. bugs, faults, performance issues, inaccuracies in the data etc).*

*RFI2 – Please disclose all incident reports or problems related to the RTI submitted by the DWP to HMRC in the previous 12 months in (e.g. bugs, faults, performance issues, inaccuracies in the data etc).*

*RFI3 – Please disclose the approach employed by HMRC and the DWP to collaborate on the RTI system. For example there may be a joint steering committee or it could be a specific item discussed at UC programme board meetings. Please explain how the work of any such group/team (e.g. decisions, actions etc) are recorded.*

I can confirm that HMRC holds information that falls within scope of your request. However, we estimate that it would exceed the FOIA cost limit to deal with it. The FOIA cost limit, which is specified in regulations, equates to one person spending 3½ working days locating and extracting all of the information within scope of the request. Consequently, under section 12(1) of the FOIA, HMRC is not obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing it further. This is because we would need to review every incident (which encompasses bugs/performance errors and issues and problems) and manually extract the data to meet the scope of your request.

You may wish to narrow the scope of your request by being more specific about the information you particularly wish to obtain, including any dates or period of time and any specific information technology issues relevant to the information required. However, please note that this information may be likely to be exempt under section 44 (1) (a) of the FOIA due to taxpayer confidentiality.

Outside the FOIA, I can provide you the following information regarding volumes of incidents and problems on RTI.

All incidents on an HMRC system are logged on one system; no differentiation between users is made.

Any issue with service performance or the user experience is raised as an incident. Some incidents will have workarounds implemented and in place and require longer term investigation. These are classified as problems.

All incidents can be logged into the IT helpdesk by any DWP or HMRC user. These are prioritised depending upon the business impact and severity. Any incident/problem fixes are agreed with users, applied and only closed when users are content the incident/problem has been resolved.

If you are not happy with this reply you may request a review by emailing [foi.review@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:foi.review@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk), or by post to HMRC FOI Team, Room 1C/23, 100 Parliament Street London SW1A 2BQ. You must request a review within 2 months of the date of this letter. It would help us carry out our review if you set out the aspects of the reply that concern you and why you are dissatisfied.

If you are not content with the outcome of an internal review, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO will not usually consider a case unless you have exhausted the internal review procedure provided by HMRC. You can make a complaint through the ICO's website at: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk), or by post to: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Team