



Department
for Work &
Pensions

DWP Central Freedom of
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[DWP Website](#)

Our Ref: FOI2021/58308

17 August 2021

Dear J Roberts,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) request received on 19 July. You wrote:

“You recently responded to the following Request (FOI2021/52054):

[https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/769284/response/1836791/attach/html/3/
Response%2052054.pdf.html](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/769284/response/1836791/attach/html/3/Response%2052054.pdf.html)

“Between Jan 2017 - Jan 2021

How many PIP claimants/customers have been referred 'internally'
by DWP staff to DWP

Vulnerable Customer Champions?”

Your Response:

“We do not hold statistical data for all internal VCC referrals within Disability Services prior to 23rd November 2020.

Therefore, from 23rd November 2020 up to 31st January 2021 Disability Services has received 208 PIP referrals internally from DWP staff.”

Your response implies that you do hold some statistical data related to the Request prior to 23rd November 2020. Maybe there was a pilot study, or maybe you hold information related to particular parts of the UK only?

1. Please provide all of the statistical data you do hold on internal VCC referrals within Disability Services prior to 23rd November 2020. Include any information (reports etc) summarising or referring to the data in question.”

DWP Response

You have asked why the DWP are unable to tell you the number of Vulnerable Customer Champion (VCC) referrals for the period of January 2017 to 22 November 2020.

In our response dated 19th July we stated we do not hold this statistical information prior to 23 November 2020. It may be helpful if I explain further as prior to 23 November 2020 there was no centralised VCC referral process which collects this information. However, there is a likelihood that we will hold some information within PIP customer records.

In order to get this statistical information, we would be required to enter every customers PIP Computer System record to obtain this information. 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. Therefore, Under Section 12 of the FoI Act the Department is therefore not obliged to comply with all of your request.

Under Section 16 of the FoI Act we should help you narrow your request so that it may fall beneath the cost limit. However, for this particular question if you were to narrow the request to a shorter time period we would still not be able to meet the request within the cost limitations. This is because as explained above it would mean we could have to manually enter all PIP customer records to search for this information.

We do hold some unofficial unpublished statistical data on some PIP VCC referrals for two sites during the period of 15 January 2019 and 22 November 20. This data is both unofficial and not representative of how many PIP customers have been referred internally by DWP staff to DWP Vulnerable Customer Champions at site or Department level.

Sunderland - From 01/03/19 to 22/11/2020 they received 39 VCC referrals via email.

Wales – They had 70 recorded VCC referrals for the period 15/01/19 to 23/11/20.

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 Contact Information](#) or telephone 0303 123 1113.