

**Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)**  
**Central Freedom of Information Team**

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX@xxx.xxx.gov.uk

**Our reference:** VTR 5477

**Date:** 12 January 2015

Dear H Mansfield ,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 24 December 2014.

You asked:

*For the period January 1st 2010 until the most recent available data of 2014, please could you provide the number of JSA claimants investigated for benefit fraud, where:*

- a) investigations showed that benefit fraud had been committed  
b) investigations results that benefit fraud had not been committed

*If possible, it would be greatly appreciated if it could be shown how many investigations were triggered as a result of human, administrative or computer error.*

*Lastly, please provide details of the policy for dealing with an erroneous or maliciously triggered investigation.*

The table below provides the number of JSA claimants investigated for benefit fraud from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014. The number of positive results following investigation and the number of investigations resulting in 'No result' due to lack of evidence to pursue, claims being correct or official error. This information is derived from operational processes and systems designed solely for the purposes of helping the Department to manage its business. As it was never the Department's intention to put this information into the public domain, it has not been subjected to the rigorous quality assurance checks applied to our published official statistics. As the DWP holds the information, we have released it. However, it is possible information held by DWP may change due to operational reasons and we recommend that caution be applied when using it.

Outcome	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Grand Total
Number of JSA claimants investigated for Benefit Fraud	205376	233707	226162	233255	183595	1082095
Positive results following investigation	49034	61380	59694	52928	43843	266879
No results due to lack of evidence, claim correct or official error	156342	172327	166468	180327	139752	815216

In response to your request to show how many investigations were triggered as a result of human, administrative or computer error, because no central record is kept, this information could only be provided by examining individual investigation files and we estimate that the cost of complying with this request would exceed the appropriate limit of £600. The appropriate limit has been specified in regulations and for central Government it is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act the Department is not obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing this part of your request further.

We have considered, as required by S.16 of the FOI Act, how we might help you to bring your request within the cost limit. However, because your request is so specific we are unable to help you do this

Finally in response to your request in regards to policy for dealing with an erroneous or maliciously triggered investigation. When an investigation concludes the alleged fraud is unsubstantiated the investigation is closed with no further action. This can occur at any stage of the investigation and judgement of this is on a case by case basis and influenced only on the basis of established facts, gathered through these processes. This does not necessarily imply this as a malicious allegation.

The department does not take any action against members of the public who may maliciously report a person for benefit fraud.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol Team

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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-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk](mailto: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 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  
[www.ico.org.uk/Global/contact\\_us](http://www.ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us) or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745