

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk

Our Ref: FOI2020/06381

21 February 2020

Dear Diptak Patel,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 12 February. You asked:

I am in receipt of Universal Credit and would like to make a claim for financial redress for maladministration against the DWP. Please advise me how I do this.

I am reluctant to complain via my local Jobcentre, as I am concerned they may seek to bury my complaint or talk it away. Please provide me with the email address of the National Special Payments Team or its successor.

And also, please provide me with any guidance and forms used by the DWP when considering a claim for redress for maladministration.

DWP Response:

I confirm we hold information relating to your request.

Under Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act, the Department for Work and Pensions is not obliged to provide access in a variety of formats if information is already accessible.

You can access this information on the Gov.uk website. In the interest of Customer Service, I have attached the link which will lead you to requested information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/compensation-for-poor-service-a-guide-for-dwp-staff>

In addition, we can summarise this guidance by explaining how DWP manage financial redress for maladministration claims and consider if a special payment is appropriate. A customer can contact either their local office or benefit centre manager to lodge their claim. A local office/benefit centre representative will gather all facts/evidence and consider if a local special payment is appropriate.

Individual offices can decide to award local special payments for the following circumstances for maladministration:

- Costs up to £250 incurred by a customer or their representative because of maladministration

- Consolatory payments up to £100 usually for more straightforward instances of maladministration

Where a customer makes a claim of maladministration and the claim for Financial redress exceeds the limits mentioned above, the local office completes a referral to the National Special Payments Team.

When an individual office or complaints manager awards a Local Special Payment and the customer is still dissatisfied, the customer can ask for the redress part of their complaint to be escalated to the National Special Payments Team. The National Special Payment Team will review the original decision and can reduce, increase or agree the amount of Special Payment awarded locally.

Special Payments Officers can adjudicate on all aspects of the Special Payment at the same time and can include decisions on Actual Financial Loss, Loss of Benefits, Interest on arrears of benefit paid as a consequence of an error and Consolatory payments. When making decisions the Special Payment Officer will only show the award value for each category of Special Payment. They do not breakdown any single award to show the value attributed for each error, they look at each case in the round.

A customer can make a request direct to the National Special Payments team via the e- mail address DWPspecialpayments.operations@dwp.gov.uk

It is necessary to point out however that on receipt of a direct request from a customer the National Special Payment team will have to refer the request back to the appropriate DWP area to investigate the complaint/request and gather evidence as described in the gov.uk link above

For your convenience I have also included a link to [DWP's complaint procedure](#) which explains that as part of the complaint process, financial redress will be considered as appropriate.

I have included the following guidance and forms used by DWP staff when considering redress for maladministration: -

- Guide for Special Payment Officers
- National Special Payment Referral Form SPR1
- Appendix A – SPR1 completion instructions
- Child Maintenance Group Special Payment Referral Form SPR1
- Local Special Payment Guidance
- Special Payment SPEC 1 Local Decision Form

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central FoI Team

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@dwf.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central FoI 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
Web: ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745