



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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

Stephen Campbell
request-1038452-6e458f94@whatdotheyknow.com

freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk

[DWP Website](#)

Our Ref: FOI2023/79197

Date: 2 November 2023

Dear Stephen Campbell,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 17 October. You wrote:

“Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am writing to request information regarding the intended and actual effects of Universal Credit on the UK labour market.

Please provide me with:

- Any internal strategy documents, aims, or objectives relating to how Universal Credit is intended to impact the labour market, such as increasing employment levels.
- Statistics, data, or reviews on actual measurable outcomes of how Universal Credit has affected the labour market, such as claimant unemployment and employment rates.
- Minutes, briefings, or correspondence from DWP ministers or senior officials discussing or reviewing Universal Credit's impacts on the labour market.
- Any studies commissioned or undertaken by the DWP on evaluating Universal Credit's efficacy in producing desired effects on the labour market.
- Information on how the DWP measures and tracks Universal Credit's outcomes relating to the labour market.

I believe this information will help improve public understanding of how Universal Credit aims to interact with and influence the UK's employment levels.”

DWP Response

We can confirm that we hold some 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 at least 3½ working days (equivalent to 24 staff-hours) in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving, and extracting it.

Under Section 12(1) of the Fol Act the Department is not therefore obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing it further. The reason being the Department is unable to provide any of the information you seek within the appropriate cost limit as you have asked for

information that is contained across multiple systems and the time period you have chosen is too wide.

Under Section 16 of the FoI Act we should help you narrow your request so that it may fall beneath the cost limit.

As your overall request is so broad and covers quite a large time period, we are not able to provide adequate advice on how you can narrow your request to a point where you might reasonably be expected to receive a response. We are sorry that we are not able to provide more specific advice under Section 16 of the FoI Act.

There is already some related information in the public domain which can be found here.

[Universal Credit programme full Business Case summary - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Universal Credit: understanding its impact on the labour market - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Universal Credit employment impact analysis: update - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Universal Credit: estimating the early labour market impacts: updated analysis - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Universal Credit: estimating the early labour market impacts - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Universal Credit: understanding how it influences employment behaviour - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Universal Credit employers' insight - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Universal Credit at work \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Universal Credit Programme Board Papers are published in the House of Commons Library: Search Criteria - Universal Credit Programme Board Papers – Department for Work and Pensions – Dates as applicable – House of Commons Library – Benefits Realisation

[Deposited papers - UK Parliament](http://www.parliament.uk)

Additional statistics have been released in response to Parliamentary Questions and can be found here:

[Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](http://www.parliament.uk)

[Written questions and answers - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](http://www.parliament.uk)

You may be interested to know that the Department publishes Official and National Statistics for Universal Credit on the Stat-Xplore website. These figures can be accessed here:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Guidance on how to extract information required from Stat-Xplore can be found at:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

You may also find it helpful to see the Official Labour Market Statistics, where the latest national unemployment and employment rates are published and can be found at:

[Home - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](http://ons.gov.uk).

Once you have reviewed this material you may want to refine your request to a specific element, focusing on a defined period of time.

We will consider afresh any revised request however we cannot guarantee that any revised request will fall within the cost limit as each FoI request is judged on its own merits.

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 Fol Team, Caxton House, 6-12 Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA.

Any request for an internal review must be received by us within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please note we are not obliged to provide a review if it is requested after more than 40 working days.

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.