



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

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

Frank Zola

request-741909-287c5bbf@whatdotheyknow.com  
What Do They Know

[freedom-of-information-  
request@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gov.uk)

[DWP Website](https://www.dwp.gov.uk)

Our Ref:FOI2021/25645

Date 28 April 2021

Dear Frank Zola,

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

*Please email me a copy of each edition of Touchbase you have sent to email subscribers after your stopped publishing them online at gov.uk after 9 March 2020:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/touchbase-dwp-news-about-work-working-age-benefits-and-services> since you started publishing on 14 September 2015.*

*Please ensure copies of Touchbase disclosed allow all embedded http www website links to be clicked on.*

*Please also disclose how Touchbase email subscribers can view an archive of past copies, before they subscribed, as access to such is a common convention for email newsletters. If you are unable to provide subscribers with access to an archive, please share information held on whether you can enable such an archive function and why you have not done so currently and in the past.*

## **DWP Response**

For the first part of your request where you have asked for all email issues of Touchbase magazine since 9 March 2020 when we stopped publishing them on GOV.UK

Under Section 14(1) of the FoI Act, public authorities are not obliged to comply with a request which is deemed vexatious.

A request may be treated as vexatious, if it is aimed at disrupting the work of an authority and if the amount of time required to review and prepare the information for disclosure would impose a grossly oppressive burden on the organisation.

By way of clarification it is the request which is treated as vexatious not the person making the request. An individual can make multiple requests and each will be considered on its own merits.

A vexatious request is assessed with reference to all the circumstances of an individual case. In this case, the Department is treating your request as vexatious for the following reasons:

As we explained in our response to your previous request FOI2021/14089; in March 2020 at the start of the coronavirus outbreak, Touchbase was issued weekly by email with information about the government's response to the pandemic. Guidance was changing rapidly and the information in Touchbase was rapidly becoming out of date. Since March 2020 we have issued in excess of fifty editions of 'Touchbase', the information contained with many of those issue is now out of date and to prepare those emails for publication in response to this request would place a considerable burden on DWP.

The non-specific nature and broad approach of your request in asking for all editions of Touchbase when we have already explained that these were being issued weekly to keep pace with the changes to government advice suggests to us that this is just a fishing exercise which will only generate further requests for information.

Should you wish to subscribe to receive the future issues of Touchbase and refine your request to asking for editions of Touchbase issued in 2021 or make a further request for specific recorded information that we hold in relation to a particular policy or benefit then we would be happy to consider it.

On this basis, the Department has decided that Section 14(1) of the Fol Act applies on this occasion.

For part two of your request where you ask about access to an archive

Under Section 14(2) of the Fol Act, public authorities are not obliged to comply with a repeat request.

Where a public authority (in this case the DWP) has previously responded to a request for information which was made by any person, it is not obliged to comply with a subsequent identical or substantially similar request from that person unless a reasonable interval has elapsed between compliance with the previous request and the making of the current request.

In this case, the Department has already responded to a similar request from you. FOI2021/14089 was responded to on 8 March 2021 and so, under section 14(2) of the Fol Act will not be responding further.

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

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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@dw.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dw.gov.uk) or by writing to: DWP Central Fol 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.