



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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

Ian Stirling
request-727840-24a1da11@whatdotheyknow.com

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

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

Our Ref: FOI2021/13097

16 March 2021

Dear Ian Stirling,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 16 February. You wrote:

"The ONS determined "Around 1 in 10 respondents testing positive for COVID-19 exhibit symptoms for a period of 12 weeks or longer".

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/news/statementsandletters/theprevalenceoflongcovidsymptomsandcovid19complications>

Universal credit claimants on being unable to work for >12 weeks normally undergo a decision to assess their health and place them in the LCW or LCWRA groups. What numbers of claimants specifying either covid, or longcovid as their diagnosed condition were placed in these groups, or a fit for work decision made over the past periods for which data is available?

(Timespan of mid-2020 to current)."

DWP Response

We can confirm that we hold 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 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 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 is that outcomes from Universal Credit health assessments are currently being developed for future publication (see below) and the health condition information is not stored in a compatible format for analysis, so we are not able to identify the requested information within the cost limit.

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

We recommend you restrict your request to ask for the number of Universal Credit (UC) households receiving either a 'limited capability for work' (LCW) element or a 'limited capability for work and work related activity' (LCWRA) element each month, to November 2020 (the latest date available).

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

Were you to restrict your request as above, section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) allows us to direct you to information that is already reasonably accessible to you.

The Department publishes Official statistics on the number of households on UC each month, from December 2018 to November 2020, broken down to show those households who receive the LCW element or the LCWRA element. These statistics can be accessed through the [Stat-Xplore](#) website. If required, you can read the guidance [here](#) on how to use this website.

You may be interested to know that analysts in the department are currently working on compiling outcome statistics for UC work capability assessments, and these are expected to include information on numbers assigned to LCW and LCWRA, and reassessments, covering a time period from April 2019 onwards and will be published in due course. The publication will be pre-announced [here](#).

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 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.