

17 November 2017

Dear Jamie Pilmer,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 21 October 2017.

You asked:

“I humbly request the amount found wrongfully Sanctioned through Universal Credit Maladministration and/or misdirection since its conception.

I also request the percentage of those found wrongfully Sanctioned, who recieved financial recompense for there loss and hardship.

Further more, I request the number since conception(in a yearly rolling amount)of Universal Credit claimants who fell past 4 weeks in the mandatory reconsideration complaints process.”

Please note that the intention of sanctions is to encourage people to engage with the support being offered by Jobcentres by making it clearer to claimants what they are expected to do in return for their benefits. Sanctions are a necessary part of the benefits system. The overwhelming majority of benefit claimants take up the jobs support we offer, with a small minority facing a sanction for not doing so.

We can confirm that we hold information falling within the description specified in your request. However, we estimate that the cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate limit for central Government, set by regulations at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act the Department is not therefore obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing it further.

Under section 16 of the Act we should assist the requester in helping narrow their request so that it may fall beneath the cost limit. Once you have reviewed the information below you may wish to narrow your request accordingly. We will consider afresh any revised request however we cannot guarantee that any revised request will fall within the cost limit.

You may be interested to know that the Department publishes Official Statistics on Universal Credit (UC) sanction decisions and information on these statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/jobseekers-allowance-sanctions>

The latest set of Official Statistics was released on 16 August 2017 and covers sanction decisions made to March 2017 and a summary of this data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/jobseekers-allowance-employment-and-support-allowance-and-universal-credit-sanctions-decisions-made-to-march-2017>

These statistics cover both:

- (i) total decisions made (i.e. if an individual has had multiple sanctions decisions made, all of those sanction decisions made will be included in the tables), and
- (ii) individuals who have had a sanction decision made (i.e. will only 'count' one individual in a table defined and produced).

These statistics also contain a wide set of geographical areas, sanction reason, sanctions appeals and outcomes, including non-adverse sanction decisions, can be extracted from Stat-Xplore: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required from Stat-Xplore can be found at: <https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started.html>

The Official Statistics are produced using our centrally held data sources; please note that the Department does not record the reason why a sanction has been overturned as part of this data source. A sanction can be overturned for a number of reasons, the most likely being that a claimant has provided additional evidence that was not supplied when the original decision was made.

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@dwp.gsi.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 <https://ico.org.uk/>