Dear Sean Brawley,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) request received on 9 August. You asked:

The DWP has stated that a number of cases of long delays to mandatory reconsideration decisions provided by CPAG were atypical. This suggests the Department holds some data on mandatory reconsideration outcomes which allows them to determine what is typical.

Please provide any internal data or estimates held for Universal Credit Mandatory Reconsideration:
   i. Clearance Times
   ii. Outcomes

Please also provide any internal data or estimates held for Universal Credit "Simple Decisions":
   i. Clearance Times
   ii. Outcomes
   iii. Number of cases where a simple decision is process is initiated prior to actioning a Mandatory Reconsideration request.

DWP Response:

I cannot deal with your request without further clarification of the information you seek. To help me do so, with regards to the second section of your request, would you be able to clarify what specifically is meant by ‘Universal Credit Simple Decisions’? Although this term was used in the Child Poverty Action Group’s (CPAG) July 2019 publication “Computer Says ‘No!’”, this term is not one generally used in the Department.

Under section 16 of the Act we should assist in helping you focus your request.

With regards to the Universal Credit (UC) Mandatory Reconsiderations (MR) Clearance Times part of the request, the Department would be able to provide the numbers of UC Full Service (UCFS) MRs completed within: 1 month, 1-2 months, 2-3 months & 3 month +. You may wish to resubmit your request asking for these figures.

With regards to the UC MR Outcomes part of the request, the cost of complying with this element 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. The reason for this would be because acquiring and reliably extracting UC MR data specifically including information on the MRs’ final outcomes would involve significant time applying specialist knowledge and a high level of skill and judgement. This would exceed the appropriate cost limit for central Government.

With regards to the “UC Simple Decisions” part of the request, 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. In this instance we are unable to provide such a suggestion due to the specific nature of this part of your request.

We will consider afresh any revised request however we cannot guarantee that any revised request will fall within the cost limit.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Policy Group Fol Team

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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@dwp.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol 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