



Department
for Work &
Pensions

DWP Central Freedom of
Information Team
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[DWP Website](https://www.dwp.gov.uk)

Our Ref: FOI2021/98622

21 December 2021

Dear Frank Zola,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (Fol) request received on 2 December. You wrote:

"Thanks you for your helpful response on suggestions on how to resubmit my FOI request.

Below is my new request:

"1. The total number of all Universal Credit (UC) waivers for Financial years 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021 (April to October).

2. The number of UC Official Error overpayments which were waived along with the amount

of money waived for the years 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021 (April to October).

3. A copy of DWP's guidance on Universal Credit official error overpayments waivers""

DWP Response

I can confirm that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) does hold the information requested.

However, it should be noted that the data contained in our response has been sourced from internal DWP management information, intended only to help the Department to manage its business. It is not intended for publication and has not been subject to the same quality assurance checks applied to our published official statistics.

Question 1:

Period	UC Waivers Requested
2019/2020	60
2020/2021	50
2021/2022	70

To be noted that the above figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Question 2:

Period	Waivers Accepted	Waivers Accepted Value
2019/2020	10	£13,000
2020/2021	10	£22,000
2021/2022	10	£54,000

To be noted that the above Waiver Accepted figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. The Waivers Accepted Value has been rounded to the nearest £1K.

Question 3:

DWP pays welfare benefits to around 23 million people and is committed to ensuring that the right people are paid the right amount of Universal Credit. The vast majority of benefit expenditure (more than £200bn across all benefits last financial year) is paid correctly, with front line staff working hard to prevent overpayments from occurring.

Where an overpayment does occur, the Department has a responsibility to taxpayers to recover the money without creating undue financial hardship. Universal Credit overpayments are recoverable, irrespective of how they arose. Where recovery is made by deduction from Universal Credit, there is a limit placed on the overall amount that can be deducted. Formerly 40% of the Universal Credit Standard Allowance, this was reduced to 30% in October 2019 and again to 25% in April 2021.

A waiver can only be granted where the recovery of the overpayment is causing substantial medical and/or financial hardship, and where clear evidence of this can be provided.

However, any claimants struggling with the proposed rate of deductions are encouraged to contact DWP Debt Management to discuss affordability, so that a lower repayment rate can be negotiated as appropriate.

Guidance relating to Universal Credit Official Error waivers can found in the Benefit Overpayment Recovery Guide, which can be accessed online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/benefit-overpayment-recovery-staff-guide/benefit-overpayment-recovery-guide>

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Freedom of Information 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@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.