

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team
e-mail: freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov

Our Ref: Fol 3044, IR 516, IR 604

Date: 3rd January 2018

Dear Mr Slater,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 19 July, 12 October and 23 November 2017. Please accept our apologies for the delay. You asked:

"In its response dated 25 April 2017 (FOI ref: Fol 5067, ICO reference – FS50637830) the Department referred to 3 activity streams in respect of the management of the Universal Credit programme ("UC"):

- Governance and Project Management*
- Transformation and Planning*
- UC Product Development*

RFI1 - Please confirm if these constitute all of the activity streams for UC? If there are more than these 3 activity streams please disclose what they are called and their scope?

RFI2 – Who sits on the UC Programme Board and how frequently does it meet?

In my RFI of 10 April 2017 I asked:

"RFI3 - What deliverables (I assume documents or some sort) are provided to the UCP Programme Board to allow them to review progress at the programme level and give direction/guidance to the team? (Please note I want to know what the deliverables are not their contents). "

The Department responded:

"The response to RF1 above gives details about how the Universal Credit programme reviews progress. The Board also checks progress by review of specific tasks and actions. Status is assessed by balancing the development of building digital features, the readiness of operations and the latest data, underpinned by scrutiny of the Programme from the Infrastructure and Projects Authority. The Programme Board also evaluates the critical activity in the next 6 months and the relative priorities of these activities.

All of this is reinforced by the business case process, overseen by the Treasury, which sets the parameters for the Programme in terms of inputs, outputs and the outcomes sought for the reform.

In addition, the Programme Board provides second line assurance to the Senior Responsible Owner, who is accountable for the delivery of the Programme to Parliament under responsibilities outlined in paragraph 5.6 of the Ministerial Code. The Programme Board draws on a number of sources in order to discharge these second line assurance functions. "

You went on to request the following:

As there is no mention of what deliverables (i.e. documents) are provided to the UC Programme Board, the requested information was not supplied. It isn't credible that the members of the UC Programme Board would have to individually source the information from the "number of sources" referenced above. The relevant information would normally be provided to members of the board for each meeting. This would usually take the form of a "pack" of some kind, either in paper form or electronically. In addition to the "pack" it is not unusual for presentations to be made to a programme board by members of the programme team.

RF13 – Please disclose the "pack of information" provided to the UC programme board members for the 3 most recent UC programme board meetings. If available also include any presentations made to the board or documents handed to the board "on the day".

In response to RF1:

There are three additional activity streams which the Programme Board reviews. Please find details of their names and scope below.

The first additional activity stream is called **Digital Service Centres**.

This describes the establishment of Universal Credit Service Centres.

The second activity stream is called **UC Product Development**,

This describes the digital features that Universal Credit develops and deploys.

The third activity stream is called **Implementation and Delivery**.

This describes the phases and transition activity for UC full service rollout.

In response to RF2:

The following people sit on the Programme Board.

- Non-Executive Chair – Sir Robert Walmsley
- UC Director General and Senior Responsible Owner - Neil Couling
- DWP Operations Director General - Andrew Rhodes
- UC Programme Director - Ian Wright
- DWP IT Director General, Chief Information Officer – Mayank Prakesh
- DWP Finance Director General – Peter Schofield
- DWP Strategy, Policy and Analysis Group, Director of Working Age – Pete Searle
- HMRC Director General (Tax Credits and RTI) - Shelagh Brown
- London Borough Islington Chief Executive and UC Partnership Forum – Lesley Seary
- DWP Human Resources Director General – Debbie Alder

- HMT Director of Personal Tax, Welfare and Pensions - Beth Russell
- Cabinet Office, Deputy Director of Major Projects Authority – Jonathan Shebiola
- DSD Northern Ireland Social Security Agency, Chief Executive – Denis McMahon

The Programme Board sits monthly.

In response to RF3.

Some of the information you request is reasonably accessible in the public domain and therefore falls under the s.21 exemption. In accordance with our s.16 FOIA 2000 duty, we have provided links in this response to where you can access the information.

This includes:

May 2017 Programme Board

The Universal Credit rollout schedule.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664591/universal-credit-transition-rollout-schedule.pdf

The Universal Credit landlord portal

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-09-04/7855>

Local Authority liaison

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/universal-credit-for-local-authorities>

Welfare Reform changes

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/welfare-reform>

The UK Government's "Digital by Default" strategy

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy>

June 2017 Programme Board

Universal Credit Payment timeliness data

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/universal-credit-payment-timeliness-january-to-june-2017>

July 2017

Universal Credit Business Case

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmpublic/601/601.pdf>

I confirm that some of the information you requested is not being disclosed as it falls under the exemption in Section 36 (2) (b) and (c) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

This exemption covers information which if released would, or would be likely to, prejudice the free and frank provision of advice or which would otherwise, or would be likely otherwise to, prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.

This exemption requires the public interest for and against disclosure to be balanced.

We recognise that the publication of all the information requested could provide a greater understanding of the risks, issues and progress steps of the Universal Credit Programme and so help inform a wider public debate.

However, we have to balance this against the public interest in non-disclosure of information, where such disclosure would have an adverse effect on the free and frank provision of advice to the Board and the free and frank exchange of views between Board members and their advisers, which would or would be likely to adversely affect the effective conduct of public affairs. There is a strong public interest in the Department maintaining efficient and effective programme management and ensuring that resources are targeted at project delivery. The public interest in refusing to disclose the information weighs heavier than the public interest in disclosure, because such disclosure would be likely to divert scarce resources from programme delivery.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Strategy Fol 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 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
www.ico.gov.uk