

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-xxxxxxx@xxx.xxx.xx

Our Ref: Fol 3784

DATE: 27 April 2016

Dear Mr Slater,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 7 September 2015. You asked for:

In respect of the Universal Credit Programme please disclose the following: RFI1: The version of the milestone schedule created after the programme was reset in early 2013. I would be happy with a version created within a maximum of 3 months after the reset. Should the DWP attempt to engage one of the statutory exemptions I expect it to justify why information that is now more than 2 years old should be withheld.

You followed up again on 26 February seeking an internal review because of a lack of response. We uphold that review on the grounds of lateness and apologise for the long delay.

I confirm that the Department holds this information but it is being withheld as it falls under the exemption in Section 36 (2) (b) and (c) of the Freedom of Information Act.

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 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 fact that the withheld documentation includes details of a sensitive nature whose publication would prejudice effective conduct of public affairs. There is a strong public interest in the Department maintaining efficient and effective programme management and in ensuring that this process is not undermined by premature disclosure particularly where risks to delivery are not yet fully mitigated.

There is also a strong public interest in the Department being able to carry out and use frank assessments, including unrestrained and candid contributions from business areas.

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@dwpgsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, 4th Floor Caxton House , 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 www.ico.gov.uk