

**Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)**  
**Central Freedom of Information Team**

xx@xxx.xxx.gov.uk

**Our reference:** VTR3507 & IR438

**Date:** 5 September 2014

Dear Mr Martin,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information review request which we received on 5 September 2014. I acknowledge that in this instance, the Department failed to respond within the 20 working days and we apologise for the delay. Furthermore, we apologise for not keeping you updated of the progress of your request.

In reviewing your request the reviewing officer upholds your complaint as the Department failed to respond to your request within 20 days.

The response to your original request is set out below.

Thank you for your FOI request of 6 August 2014. You asked:

How many Benefit Claimants (including but not limited to Incapacity Benefit/ESA and Disability Living Allowance/PIP) had their Annual Christmas Bonus adjusted by The Department For Work and Pensions from £10 to £0.00 in the following financial years 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15. How many of these from the Birkenhead Benefits office?

How many instances in each of the years mentioned did DWP proactively make good The Christmas Bonus as a result of this alteration? How many of these were from the Birkenhead Benefits office?

How many Benefit Claimants have had their Bonus Payments repaid? How many of these from the Birkenhead Benefits office?

How many Benefit Claimants received compensation/ex gratia payments for having their Christmas Bonus altered? How many of these from the Birkenhead Benefits office?

How many complaints were received over the alteration of these Christmas Bonus Payments in each of the years mentioned? How many of these from the Birkenhead Benefits office?

Which person(s) authorised the alteration of the Christmas Bonus to read £0.00?

How many employees of Department for Work and Pensions have been subjected to Disciplinary action over the alteration of the Christmas Bonus to read £0.00 and How many of these from the Birkenhead Benefits office?

How many Benefit Offices were involved in altering the Christmas Bonus to read £0.00, which is effectively an illegal benefit sanction which does not correspond with any legislation, and which Benefit Offices were involved in altering the Christmas Bonus?

Following a search of our paper and electronic records, We have established that the information you requested is not held by this Department.

We have no information to suggest that Christmas Bonus payments have been mishandled by DWP staff.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central 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](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.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.org.uk/Global/contact\\_us](http://www.ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us) or telephone 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745