

Freedom of Information request 144/2014

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Information request and response

Please can you provide me with the following:

Copies of any information held by the department relating to "benefit tourism"

- **this should include, but is not limited to all e-mails discussing this issue**

The question is too broad as it encompasses the 'department' (the whole of DWP) an organisation of between 80 -100,000 staff.

We estimate that the cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate limit of £600. The appropriate limit has been specified in regulations and for central Government it is set 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 the information. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act the Department is not obliged to comply with your request.

You also asked:

Any estimates or data revealing

- **the number of benefit recipients of non British nationality**
- **which benefits these people receive (and the number of British citizens claiming the same benefits)**
- **how long they were in the UK before starting to claim (if this information is held)**

Please also provide

- **an estimate of the total cost of benefits received by non-British nationals as a percentage of the total spending on each benefit organised by the department (and the total cost of each benefit)**

In this context "benefit tourism" means the allegedly practice of non-British EU citizens travelling to the UK to claim benefits rather than to work.

We currently check the immigration status of benefit claimants to ensure the benefit is paid properly and to prevent fraud. While this information is used, it

is not recorded as part of the payment administrative systems. We are therefore unable to provide the data you have requested.

Looking forward, the Government is looking at ways to record nationality and immigration status of migrants who make a claim to Universal Credit so that we have more robust management information about our claimants.