

Freedom of Information request 2076/2014

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Information request

I would like to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act. Please provide me with the following information:

1) The number of people who have started on Universal Credit as of April 1st 2014 (including those who have made a successful claim for UC that has since ended). If this figure is not available, please provide me with the latest available figure.

Of the number in 1), please tell me:

2) How many have been identified as having a clear need for personal budgeting support (as outlined in the Personal Budgeting Support guidance [here](#))

Of the number in 1), please tell me:

3) The number of people who have been signposted to online services

4) The number of people who have been provided with a single session over the phone

5) The number of people who have been provided with an intensive face-to-face session with follow-up

6) The number of alternative payment arrangements made, by type of arrangement (e.g. more frequently than monthly payments; rent paid directly to landlord)

Please also give these figures for the number in 2).

DWP response

In response to your queries concerning Universal Credit (UC), the Department published Quarter 1 data into the public domain on 14th May 2014. This includes data relating to starters on Universal Credit and caseloads at the end of each month. It can be found here:

http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/UC/Universal_Credit.html

In relation to your other queries concerning UC, the Department plans to release official statistics on this subject. As the statistics are intended for future publication this information is exempt from disclosure under the terms of Section 22 (Information intended for future publication) of the FOIA. This exemption is qualified, and is therefore subject to a public interest test. The public interest test is where the Department considers whether the balance of the public interest falls in favour of withholding or disclosing the information requested.

Arguments in favour of disclosure: There are public interest arguments in favour of disclosure of this information at the present time. Disclosure would for example improve transparency in the operations of the Department.

Arguments against disclosure: There are public interest arguments against disclosure of this information at the present time. These arguments include that it is in the public interest to adhere to the existing publication process for official statistics, which includes time for the data to be collated and properly verified.

It is also in the public interest to ensure that the publication of official information is a properly planned and managed process, to ensure that the data are accurate once placed into the public domain. It is also in the public interest to ensure that the information is available to all members of the public at the same time, and premature publication could undermine the principle of making the information available to all at the same time through the official publication process.

On this occasion, the balance of the public interest test falls in favour of withholding this information. As explained above, statistics on this issue will be published in due course.

The Department is working to guidelines set by the UK Statistics Authority to ensure we are able to publish statistics that meet high quality standards at the earliest opportunity. Official Statistics on Universal Credit can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/universal-credit-statistics>