

Knowledge & Information Access Team

Department for Communities and Local
Government
2nd floor NW, Fry Building
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Telephone: 030 3444 2222

Mr Steve Crossley
By email: s.j.crossley@durham.ac.uk

Date: **19 February 2015**

Dear Mr Crossley

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Ref. 693878)

Thank you for your request for information which was received on 22 January 2015.

You requested: *On page 10 of the DCLG 'financial framework' publication for the Troubled Families Programme, it states that in addition to local audit processes for PBR claims submitted by local authorities, Department for Communities and Local Government will carry out a small number of 'spot checks' in a sample of areas'.*

Could you please provide me with information regarding how many such 'spot checks' have been carried out, the month(s) and years that these 'spot checks' were carried out and whether any of the checks revealed any erroneous or false claims by local authorities?

If there were any erroneous or false claims submitted, could you please provide me with the % of erroneous or false claims in local authorities where any inaccuracies were found? Could you also please let me know what action, if any, was taken regarding erroneous or false claims?

Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I can confirm that the information requested is held by the Department for Communities and Local Government and we are able to provide you with all this information. I have detailed below the information that is being released to you.

The Troubled Families Programme operates a payment by results scheme; areas will receive a percentage of their allocated funding once they have achieved a successful outcome with families that they have identified as eligible for the programme. The Troubled Families Financial Framework sets out the eligibility criteria for including families on the programme and also dictates the circumstances in which an area can claim a valid result.

Before the end of the current Troubled Families Programme in May 2015, each area will be subject to a 'spot check' of their results claims at least once. Since the start of the programme in April 2012, 121 local authorities have been subject to the spot check process.

Areas are able to claim results during regular claim windows. Spot checks take place after each results claim window, the purpose of a spot check is to ensure that results claimed by an area meet the requirements of the financial framework.

After each claim window between 10% and 30% of areas who made a claim are required to participate in the spot check process. A minimum sample of 10% of claims made by these areas will be considered during the spot check. DCLG selects the sample to be considered to represent a range of different result types and families who met different eligibility criteria on entry to the programme.

Spot checks have taken place after each of the following claim windows:

October 2013 (98% of 208 claims checked found to be valid)
January 2014 (96% of 489 claims checked found to be valid)
April 2014 (97.2% of 181 claims checked found to be valid)
August 2014 (96.93% of 455 claims checked found to be valid)
October 2014 (90% of 490 claims checked found to be valid)

A small number of spot checks also took place after the January and July 2013 claim windows to develop the spot check process; all areas who took part in these checks will undergo a second spot check before the end of the programme.

If the spot check process highlights any errors in claims, there are a number of follow up actions that we will require an area to complete. This includes:

- A check of all claims in the affected claim window to ensure that all cases where an error has been made are identified.
- A check of claims made in all previous claim windows to ensure that all claims where an error has been made are identified.
- Selection of the relevant area for a future spot check.
- Agreement of on-going actions to ensure that the error made does not reoccur.

All payments made in relation to invalid claims have been recouped by DCLG.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review which should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of this letter and should be addressed to:

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2nd Floor NW, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
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If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the internal review procedure provided by the Department.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:
The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow,
Cheshire, SK9 5AF.
Phone: 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Anna Canning
Knowledge & Information Access Team