

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team  
e-mail: [freedom-of-information-requesx@xxx.xxi.gov](mailto:freedom-of-information-requesx@xxx.xxi.gov)

Our Ref: FoI 4287

Date: 6 November 2017

Dear Glenys Harriman,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 9 October 2017. You asked:

*In response to FOI 4843 you stated:*

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*"UC claims are kept open for 6 months in live service. The UC claimant can then retrieve their data via a Data Protection Request.*

*UC full service accounts can currently be accessed indefinitely."*

*Whereas in FOI 4859/IR 196 you state:*

*"The legislative reference you have asked for relates to the Fifth Principle of the Data Protection Act which states: 'Personal data for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than necessary for that purpose or those purposes.'*

*Depending on the data involved the Department will decide how long that data needs to be retained, according to the retention policy, whether it be for 6 months or 14 months or any other period of time.*

*But for UC, new claims will be held open for 14 months if there are no changes in circumstances."*

*1. Could you confirm whether the indefinite period of UC full service accounts as referred to under comes under FOI 4843 also comes under the Fifth Principle of the Data Protection Act and is thereby subject to the discretion of the DWP or if it comes under another section.*

*2. Please confirm whether under FOI 4859 this is purely talking about keeping a UC claim open ( eg so that it can be returned to under a Rapid Reclaim) or whether it also applies to the retention of data including journal entries.*

A claimant's Universal Credit account cannot be accessed indefinitely. If a claimant is reclaiming within 6 months, they can reclaim and access their Universal Credit records. Anything outside of the 6 months period; claimants will have to start the process of claiming again.

A claimant's Universal Credit account will not be open for 14 months; our data retention period is 14 months. The reclaim period is 6 months.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Strategy Fol Team

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**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-requexx@xxx.xxx.xxx.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-requexx@xxx.xxx.xxx.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.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)