

Annex 5F: There are fewer UC complaints made each month than tribunal cases lost by DWP each week

“I have a complaint rate on Universal Credit of 0.01%,” said the Senior Responsible Owner for Universal Credit to Parliament.¹

According to the latest figures available on the date of that statement,² there were “6.0 million people on Universal Credit”. Simple arithmetic suggests Mr Couling was therefore referring to about 600 complaints, over an undefined time period.³

This figure must however be seen in the context of the *tens of thousands* of benefits appeals that DWP loses each quarter,⁴ in which fully two-thirds of DWP’s initial decisions are still being revised in favour of the claimant.

Even with the pandemic ‘spike’ in UC claims, there are fewer UC “complaints” per month than the number of benefits cases DWP loses in court *each week*.

If so many more people will win via independent tribunal, what is the point of complaining to DWP internally about the process it designed, when the substantive outcome is so often correctable by the tribunal?

¹ Q18, bottom of page 25: <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/1859/pdf>

² <https://gov.uk/government/statistics/universal-credit-statistics-29-april-2013-to-14-january-2021/universal-credit-statistics-29-april-2013-to-14-january-2021>

³ Is the “0.01%” complaint rate per day, per week, or per month? The number of reported complaints for all of DWP’s businesses from 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021 suggests the latter:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-dwp-financial-year-2020-to-2021/complaints-about-dwp-financial-year-2020-to-2021> - noting the 2020-21 number is roughly *half* the number recorded in the previous financial year:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-dwp-financial-year-2019-to-2020/complaints-about-dwp-financial-year-2019-to-2020> - this question would benefit from more scrutiny when 2021/2022 figures are available. As DWP brought back parts of different services at different times, more granular data will give more clarity on which parts of which services cause disproportionate complaints.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2021/tribunal-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2021#social-security-and-child-support>