

# The Risk Review Team

## Advice NI Policy & Information Briefing

### The Risk Review Team

In light of an increase in enquiries in this area from clients, we wanted to draw attention to an aspect of the benefit management system that is not well understood: the work of the Risk Review Team. Part of the reason for the lack of clarity about risk review is the limited information available in the public domain.

What we do know is that the Risk Review Team was set up by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to investigate cases identified by the Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service (IRIS) 'as being a high fraud risk.'<sup>1</sup> Beyond that, we cannot say a great deal about their processes, as the Under-Secretary of State has repeatedly refused to provide more detail on the grounds that the information would be 'sensitive' and could undermine the Department's ability to prosecute fraud.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Risk Review Team is run by the DWP it also has responsibility for Northern Ireland cases. This creates significant problems for clients and advisers here due to a lack of direct communication between Department for Communities (DfC) benefit administrators and the Risk Review Team itself. We have approached DfC for any additional information they can provide, and for now they have reiterated previous guidance for advisers to escalate cases in the normal way with the benefit teams concerned, who will then seek what information they can via Benefit Security here in Northern Ireland.

We present below a series of responses made by the Under-Secretary of State to [written questions tabled in Parliament](#) by the Labour MP for Edmonton, Kate Osamor. Alongside an [adjournment debate](#) on the Risk Review Team also secured by Kate Osamor, these provide the only official information available about the cases being dealt with by this team. It appears from these exchanges in Parliament, as well as our client's experiences and the information from staff at DfC, that cases subject to risk review are those where there are questions relating to the client's identity. For obvious reasons, these investigations disproportionately affect foreign national claimants, quite often those with limited English. As such, we would emphasise the necessity of engaging interpreting services when supporting these clients to assist their understanding of the processes. It is also essential that the client is able to make their needs known to departmental staff at the outset of any interaction.

<sup>1</sup> [UIN 78475](#), tabled on 19 November 2021

<sup>2</sup> UIN [78472](#), [78473](#), [78476](#), [84421](#), [84425](#), [107650](#), [107653](#), [107655](#)

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## General/Procedural

### [UIN 78472](#), tabled on 19 November 2021

#### **To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria that are used by the Risk Review Team to prompt an investigation into a benefit claim.**

The Risk Review Team (RRT) was created in May 2020 as a direct response to threats identified by the Department's Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service (IRIS).

IRIS brings together the Department's Risk and Intelligence Service, our Cyber Resilience Team and our co-ordination of our response to Serious and Organised Crime activity.

Last year, IRIS coordinated the detection of, and response to, fraud risks from organised crime groups seeking to exploit COVID-19, which meant that systematic attacks on the benefit system were detected and shut down. In this way cyber colleagues prevented an attack by organised criminals which would have seen £1.9 billion in benefits being paid to people trying to scam the system.

The role of the RRT is to review and take action on cases identified by IRIS as being a high fraud risk. The numbers engaged in RRT activity have fluctuated dependant on the numbers of claims identified. However, 165 full time equivalent staff are currently engaged on the RRT.

The methods used to identify cases that are reviewed by the RRT are sensitive and, as such, we are not able to provide the mechanics of how they are identified. By putting such methods - or the guidance to the team - in the public domain, we would risk undermining the ability of DWP to detect and counter fraudulent threats.

### [UIN 78473](#), tabled on 19 November 2021

#### **To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will place in the Library a copy of guidance to the Risk Review Team on the investigation of benefit claims.**

The Risk Review Team (RRT) was created in May 2020 as a direct response to threats identified by the Department's Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service (IRIS).

IRIS brings together the Department's Risk and Intelligence Service, our Cyber Resilience Team and our co-ordination of our response to Serious and Organised Crime activity.

Last year, IRIS coordinated the detection of, and response to, fraud risks from organised crime groups seeking to exploit COVID-19, which meant that systematic attacks on the benefit system were detected and shut down. In this way cyber colleagues prevented an attack by organised criminals which would have seen £1.9 billion in benefits being paid to people trying to scam the system.

The role of the RRT is to review and take action on cases identified by IRIS as being a high fraud risk.

The numbers engaged in RRT activity have fluctuated dependant on the numbers of claims identified. However, 165 full time equivalent staff are currently engaged on the RRT.

The methods used to identify cases that are reviewed by the RRT are sensitive and, as such, we are not able to provide the mechanics of how they are identified. By putting such methods - or the guidance to the team - in the public domain, we would risk undermining the ability of DWP to detect and counter fraudulent threats.

**[UIN 78476](#), tabled on 19 November 2021**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on what date the risk review team was established, how many staff work on that team; and what the objectives are of that team.**

The Risk Review Team (RRT) was created in May 2020 as a direct response to threats identified by the Department's Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service (IRIS). IRIS brings together the Department's Risk and Intelligence Service, our Cyber Resilience Team and our co-ordination of our response to Serious and Organised Crime activity.

Last year, IRIS coordinated the detection of, and response to, fraud risks from organised crime groups seeking to exploit COVID-19, which meant that systematic attacks on the benefit system were detected and shut down. In this way cyber colleagues prevented an attack by organised criminals which would have seen £1.9 billion in benefits being paid to people trying to scam the system.

The role of the RRT is to review and take action on cases identified by IRIS as being a high fraud risk. The numbers engaged in RRT activity have fluctuated dependant on the numbers of claims identified. However, 165 full time equivalent staff are currently engaged on the RRT.

The methods used to identify cases that are reviewed by the RRT are sensitive and, as such, we are not able to provide the mechanics of how they are identified. By putting such methods - or the guidance to the team - in the public domain, we would risk undermining the ability of DWP to detect and counter fraudulent threats.

**[UIN 84421](#), tabled on 30 November 2021**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the policy that her Department's Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service use to identify which benefit claims present a high fraud risk.**

The methods used to identify cases reviewed by the Risk Review Team are sensitive and, as such, we are not able to provide the mechanics of how they are identified. By putting such methods or the guidance in the public domain, we would risk undermining the ability of DWP to detect and counter fraudulent threats.

**[UIN 84425](#), tabled on 30 November 2021**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will publish the policy that is followed by the Risk Review Team when investigating a claim they have suspended.**

The methods used to identify cases reviewed by the Risk Review Team are sensitive and, as such, we are not able to provide the mechanics of how they are identified. By putting such methods or the guidance in the public domain, we would risk undermining the ability of DWP to detect and counter fraudulent threats.

# Communication

## [UIN 78475](#), tabled on 19 November 2021

### **To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information the Risk Review Team must provide to benefit claimants when it takes the decision to suspend their claim pending an investigation.**

The Risk Review Team (RRT) was created in May 2020 as a direct response to threats identified by the Department's Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service (IRIS).

IRIS brings together the Department's Risk and Intelligence Service, our Cyber Resilience Team and our co-ordination of our response to Serious and Organised Crime activity. Last year, IRIS coordinated the detection of, and response to, fraud risks from organised crime groups seeking to exploit COVID-19, which meant that systematic attacks on the benefit system were detected and shut down. In this way cyber colleagues prevented an attack by organised criminals in which would have seen £1.9 billion in benefits being paid to people trying to scam the system.

The role of the Risk Review Team is to review and take action on cases identified by IRIS as being a high fraud risk. A monthly breakdown of cases where benefit was re-instated following suspension is not available, however approximately 3% of cases reviewed under the Risk Review Process have been reinstated. All other cases will remain suspended pending investigation or closure.

The average length of claim suspension because of the Risk Review Team activity is not available. However, the length of time that a claim is suspended is largely dependent on the engagement of the claimant and the timely provision of any information requested.

Where a customer does contact us and provides the information requested, we have processes in place to ensure people's payments are put back into payment as soon as possible. The Risk Review Team does not capture demographic data on any claims they suspend and, as such, no information can be provided on nationality.

Any Universal Credit claim that is suspended as a consequence of the Risk Review Team activity is notified by journal and text messages, along with a means by which a claimant can contact the Department and speak to the agent responsible for that case.

## [UIN 97000](#), tabled on 4 January 2022

### **To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what information the Risk Review Team shares with claimants whose benefits have been suspended under the Risk Review process.**

Any decision to suspend a claim to benefit by the Risk Review Team is not made lightly and includes an assessment of a person's personal circumstances. Suspension of benefit is a last resort and is based on the risk that a person may not be entitled to benefit.

Where a claim is suspended, we are unable to make any alternative payments. In law, there is no right of appeal against a decision to suspend payment of benefit.

If it is determined there is entitlement to Universal Credit, following the receipt of additional information and evidence from the claimant, the suspension would be lifted immediately and we would always aim to pay benefits at the earliest opportunity, including any arrears that may be due. Where a review determines there is no entitlement to Universal Credit an outcome decision will be made to that effect. This decision can be appealed.

We make all claimants aware of the evidence we need and the consequence of failing to provide it within prescribed timescales. For any Universal Credit claim that is suspended as a consequence of the Risk Review Team activity, the claimant is notified by journal and text messages, along with a means by which they can contact the Department and speak to the agent responsible for that case. At no time should claimants be unaware of the action they need to take and how they may contact us to provide evidence.

The length of time a review may take to complete is largely dependent on the engagement of the claimant and the timely provision of any information requested. Claimants are asked to provide requested information within a 14-day window for digital submissions, extended to 28 days if they have indicated a postal submission. Once a customer engages with us, the time taken to complete a review is case specific, dependant on the information provided. Once entitlement is established, payments are put into payment as soon as possible.

### [UIN 107652](#), tabled on 19 January 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, at what stage claimants who have had their benefits suspended or closed under the Risk Review Process are provided with the reasons for that suspension or closure.**

Any claimant whose benefit is suspended as a consequence of the Risk Review Team activity is notified by journal, which is a digital means by which messages are exchanged between the Department and a Universal Credit claimant. These messages tell the claimant how they can contact the Department to speak to the agent responsible for that case. Where a customer does contact us in these circumstances, they will have the opportunity to have a one to one conversation with an agent to discuss their specific claim in more detail, and the agent can request any additional information required. With the relaxation of Covid rules, we can arrange for claimants to meet officials by way of a face to face appointment, where they can receive help in understanding what has happened with regards to their claim, and with providing the correct verification information. At no point should the claimant be unaware as to what is required from them in order to determine their benefit entitlement.

## Time-Frames

### [UIN 97002](#), tabled on 4 January 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the time frame is for the Risk Review Team to finish reviews of benefits it has suspended.**

Any decision to suspend a claim to benefit by the Risk Review Team is not made lightly and includes an assessment of a person's personal circumstances. Suspension of benefit is a last resort and is based on the risk that a person may not be entitled to benefit.

Where a claim is suspended, we are unable to make any alternative payments. In law, there is no right of appeal against a decision to suspend payment of benefit.

If it is determined there is entitlement to Universal Credit, following the receipt of additional information and evidence from the claimant, the suspension would be lifted immediately and we would always aim to pay benefits at the earliest opportunity, including any arrears that may be due.

Where a review determines there is no entitlement to Universal Credit an outcome decision will be made to that effect. This decision can be appealed.

We make all claimants aware of the evidence we need and the consequence of failing to provide it within prescribed timescales. For any Universal Credit claim that is suspended as a consequence of the Risk Review Team activity, the claimant is notified by journal and text messages, along with a means by which they can contact the Department and speak to the agent responsible for that case. At no time should claimants be unaware of the action they need to take and how they may contact us to provide evidence.

The length of time a review may take to complete is largely dependent on the engagement of the claimant and the timely provision of any information requested. Claimants are asked to provide requested information within a 14-day window for digital submissions, extended to 28 days if they have indicated a postal submission. Once a customer engages with us, the time taken to complete a review is case specific, dependant on the information provided. Once entitlement is established, payments are put into payment as soon as possible.

## Suspensions

### [UIN 78477](#), tabled on 19 November 2021

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average length of a benefit claim suspension pending an investigation by the Risk Review Team was in each month from January 2015 to present.**

The Risk Review Team (RRT) was created in May 2020 as a direct response to threats identified by the Department's Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service (IRIS).

IRIS brings together the Department's Risk and Intelligence Service, our Cyber Resilience Team and our co-ordination of our response to Serious and Organised Crime activity.

Last year, IRIS coordinated the detection of, and response to, fraud risks from organised crime groups seeking to exploit COVID-19, which meant that systematic attacks on the benefit system were detected and shut down. In this way cyber colleagues prevented an attack by organised criminals in which would have seen £1.9 billion in benefits being paid to people trying to scam the system.

The role of the Risk Review Team is to review and take action on cases identified by IRIS as being a high fraud risk. A monthly breakdown of cases where benefit was re-instated following suspension is not available, however approximately 3% of cases reviewed under the Risk Review Process have been reinstated. All other cases will remain suspended pending investigation or closure.

The average length of claim suspension because of the Risk Review Team activity is not available. However, the length of time that a claim is suspended is largely dependent on the engagement of the claimant and the timely provision of any information requested. Where a customer does contact us and provides the information requested, we have processes in place to ensure people's payments are put back into payment as soon as possible. The Risk Review Team does not capture demographic data on any claims they suspend and, as such, no information can be provided on nationality.

Any Universal Credit claim that is suspended as a consequence of the Risk Review Team activity is notified by journal and text messages, along with a means by which a claimant can contact the Department and speak to the agent responsible for that case.



**[UIN 84423](#), tabled on 30 November 2021**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many cases that have been reviewed under her Department's Risk Review Process remain suspended as of 30 November 2021.**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

Where a customer does contact us and provides the information requested, we have processes in place to ensure people's payments are put back into payment as soon as possible. The Risk Review Team does not capture demographic data on any claims they suspend and, as such, no information can be provided on nationality.

Any Universal Credit claim that is suspended as a consequence of the Risk Review Team activity is notified by journal and text messages, along with a means by which a claimant can contact the Department and speak to the agent responsible for that case.

**[UIN 107658](#), tabled on 19 January 2022**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2022 to Question 97000 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, how many claims have been reviewed by the Risk Review Team but not suspended.**

Due to the high risk of fraud associated to the claims identified through this process, and in order to protect the public purse, all claims are suspended pending contact from the claimant, and the provision of any information requested to support a review and decision on entitlement.

**[UIN 107654](#), tabled on 19 January 2022**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2022 to Question 97000 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, what steps are taken by the Risk Review Team prior to suspending a claimant's benefits to ensure that suspension is a last resort.**

The Risk Review Team only reviews, and therefore suspends, cases where there is a high risk of fraud based on specific intelligence.

**[UIN 107650](#), tabled on 19 January 2022**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reasons a claim may be suspected of fraud and therefore subject to the Risk Review Process.**

The specific methods employed by the Risk Review Team are sensitive and, as such, we are not able to provide the mechanics of how they are identified, or how they are progressed. By putting such methods or the guidance in the public domain, we would risk undermining the ability of DWP to detect and counter fraudulent threats.

## Reinstatements

[UIN 78478](#), tabled on 19 November 2021

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many and what proportion of benefit claims suspended pending an investigation by the Risk Review Team, were then reinstated, in each month since January 2015.**

The Risk Review Team (RRT) was created in May 2020 as a direct response to threats identified by the Department's Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service (IRIS).

IRIS brings together the Department's Risk and Intelligence Service, our Cyber Resilience Team and our co-ordination of our response to Serious and Organised Crime activity.

Last year, IRIS coordinated the detection of, and response to, fraud risks from organised crime groups seeking to exploit COVID-19, which meant that systematic attacks on the benefit system were detected and shut down. In this way cyber colleagues prevented an attack by organised criminals in which would have seen £1.9 billion in benefits being paid to people trying to scam the system.

The role of the Risk Review Team is to review and take action on cases identified by IRIS as being a high fraud risk. A monthly breakdown of cases where benefit was re-instated following suspension is not available, however approximately 3% of cases reviewed under the Risk Review Process have been reinstated. All other cases will remain suspended pending investigation or closure.

The average length of claim suspension because of the Risk Review Team activity is not available. However, the length of time that a claim is suspended is largely dependent on the engagement of the claimant and the timely provision of any information requested. Where a customer does contact us and provides the information requested, we have processes in place to ensure people's payments are put back into payment as soon as possible. The Risk Review Team does not capture demographic data on any claims they suspend and, as such, no information can be provided on nationality.

Any Universal Credit claim that is suspended as a consequence of the Risk Review Team activity is notified by journal and text messages, along with a means by which a claimant can contact the Department and speak to the agent responsible for that case.

## Decision Making

[UIN 107655](#), tabled on 19 January 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2022 to Question 97000 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, what information is taken into account when carrying out an assessment of a person's personal circumstances prior to suspending their benefits.**

The specific methods employed by the Risk Review Team are sensitive and, as such, we are not able to provide the mechanics of how they are identified, or how they are progressed. By putting such methods or the guidance in the public domain, we would risk undermining the ability of DWP to detect and counter fraudulent threats.

[UIN 107656](#), tabled on 19 January 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2022 to Question 97000 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, what the average time taken by the Risk Review Team is to make a decision on a claimant's entitlement once a claimant has engaged with the Risk Review Team.**

Once a customer engages with us, the time taken to complete a review is case specific. It is dependent on the information provided and it may also be necessary to involve independent decision makers. If entitlement is established, any suspension will be lifted and any payments due will be made without delay.

## Evidence

[UIN 107651](#), tabled on 19 January 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what further evidence may be requested from claimants who have had their benefits suspended under the Risk Review Process.**

The Risk Review Team may ask for any information and/or supporting evidence that is required to determine correct benefit entitlement.

## Appeal Rights

[UIN 84426](#), tabled on 30 November 2021

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what her policy is on claimants' right to appeal when their claims have been suspended by the Risk Review Team.**

In law there is no right of appeal against a decision to suspend payment of benefit. If it is determined there is entitlement to Universal Credit following review by the Risk Review Team, the suspension will be lifted immediately. If it is determined there is no entitlement, an outcome decision will be made to that effect. This decision can be appealed.

[UIN 97001](#), tabled on 4 January 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether claimants who have had their benefits suspended under the Risk Review process are able to request a reconsideration of that decision or appeal against it.**

Any decision to suspend a claim to benefit by the Risk Review Team is not made lightly and includes an assessment of a person's personal circumstances. Suspension of benefit is a last resort and is based on the risk that a person may not be entitled to benefit. Where a claim is suspended, we are unable to make any alternative payments. In law, there is no right of appeal against a decision to suspend payment of benefit.

If it is determined there is entitlement to Universal Credit, following the receipt of additional information and evidence from the claimant, the suspension would be lifted immediately and we would always aim to pay benefits at the earliest opportunity, including any arrears that may be due.

Where a review determines there is no entitlement to Universal Credit an outcome decision will be made to that effect. This decision can be appealed.

We make all claimants aware of the evidence we need and the consequence of failing to provide it within prescribed timescales. For any Universal Credit claim that is suspended as a consequence of the Risk Review Team activity, the claimant is notified by journal and text messages, along with a means by which they can contact the Department and speak to the agent responsible for that case. At no time should claimants be unaware of the action they need to take and how they may contact us to provide evidence.

The length of time a review may take to complete is largely dependent on the engagement of the claimant and the timely provision of any information requested. Claimants are asked to provide requested information within a 14-day window for digital submissions, extended to 28 days if they have indicated a postal submission. Once a customer engages with us, the time taken to complete a review is case specific, dependant on the information provided. Once entitlement is established, payments are put into payment as soon as possible.

## Practical Support

### [UIN 125362](#), tabled on 18 February 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what process the Risk Review team has put in place to work with local authorities who are assisting individuals who have had their benefits suspended under the risk review process.**

The Department engages with a wide range of external organisations, including employers, partners, representatives and stakeholders, for varying reasons.

The Risk Review Team will engage with Local Authorities if they have a query regarding a claimant they are supporting. We can share information relating to alternative payment arrangements with all Local Authorities across the UK when acting in a welfare capacity. Claimant consent is, however, required for the initial referral.

### [UIN 125363](#), tabled on 18 February 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether charities, local authorities and other third parties are permitted to contact the Risk Review Team on behalf of the claimant who has had their benefits suspended under the Risk Review Process.**

The Risk Review Team follows standard disclosure and consent guidelines. Claimants have full access to information held on their account. If claimants feel unable to find the information or understand more complex issues, they may ask a representative to contact DWP on their behalf to obtain the information.

A representative is any person or organisation acting on behalf of or making enquiries for the claimant. This can be at any stage of the claimant's Universal Credit claim. The customer must provide explicit consent to discuss their personal data with a third party; consent can be given over the phone, in person or through their journal.

# Financial Support

[UIN 96998](#), tabled on 4 January 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what financial support is available to claimants whose benefits have been suspended under the Risk Review process.**

Any decision to suspend a claim to benefit by the Risk Review Team is not made lightly and includes an assessment of a person's personal circumstances. Suspension of benefit is a last resort and is based on the risk that a person may not be entitled to benefit.

Where a claim is suspended, we are unable to make any alternative payments. In law, there is no right of appeal against a decision to suspend payment of benefit.

If it is determined there is entitlement to Universal Credit, following the receipt of additional information and evidence from the claimant, the suspension would be lifted immediately and we would always aim to pay benefits at the earliest opportunity, including any arrears that may be due.

Where a review determines there is no entitlement to Universal Credit an outcome decision will be made to that effect. This decision can be appealed.

We make all claimants aware of the evidence we need and the consequence of failing to provide it within prescribed timescales. For any Universal Credit claim that is suspended as a consequence of the Risk Review Team activity, the claimant is notified by journal and text messages, along with a means by which they can contact the Department and speak to the agent responsible for that case. At no time should claimants be unaware of the action they need to take and how they may contact us to provide evidence.

The length of time a review may take to complete is largely dependent on the engagement of the claimant and the timely provision of any information requested. Claimants are asked to provide requested information within a 14-day window for digital submissions, extended to 28 days if they have indicated a postal submission. Once a customer engages with us, the time taken to complete a review is case specific, dependant on the information provided. Once entitlement is established, payments are put into payment as soon as possible.

## Statistics

[UIN 84422](#), tabled on 30 November 2021

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2021 to Question 78474 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, how many and what proportion of cases reviewed under the Risk Review Process have been closed as of 30 November 2021.**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

[UIN 84424](#), tabled on 30 November 2021

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 30 November 2021 to Question 78474 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, what proportion of claims reviewed by the Risk Review Team have been closed as a result of fraud as of 30 November 2021.**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

**[UIN 84427](#), tabled on 30 November 2021**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claims have been suspended under the Risk Review Process.**

Since the Risk Review Team was created in May 2020, there have been 3,761,761 claims made to Universal Credit. Of those, 149,057 have been suspended under the Risk Review Process, a percentage of 3.96%.

**[UIN 90473](#), tabled on 9 December 2021**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2021 to Question 84427, Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, with reference to the 149,057 cases suspended under the Risk Review Process, how many and what proportion (a) remain suspended, (b) have been closed and (c) were reinstated.**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

**[UIN 90474](#), tabled on 9 December 2021**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2021 to Question 84427 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, how many of the 149,057 cases that have been suspended under the Risk Review Process were suspended in each month from May 2020 to December 2021.**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

**[UIN 90475](#), tabled on 9 December 2021**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2021 to Question 84427 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, with reference to the 149,057 cases that were suspended under the Risk Review Process, how many were suspended due to (a) suspected fraud and (b) claimant error.**

All claims that have been suspended under the Risk Review Process are done so where there is suspicion of fraud.

**[UIN 90476](#), tabled on 9 December 2021**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2021 to Question 84427 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, of the 149,057 cases that were suspended under the Risk Review Process how many appeals have been lodged after a decision was issued.**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

**[UIN 90477](#), tabled on 9 December 2021**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2021 to Question 84427 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, of the 149,057 cases suspended under the Risk Review Process, what the average time is between (a) the start of the suspension and (b) a decision being issued.**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

**[UIN 96988](#), tabled on 4 January 2022**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2021 to Question 84427 on Social Security Benefit: Disqualification, how many of the 149,057 cases that were suspended under the Risk Review Process remain suspended as of December 2021.**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

**[UIN 97003](#), tabled on 4 January 2022**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit claims were suspended under the Risk Review process as of 24 December 2021.**

Since the Risk Review Team was created in May 2020, latest published figures show there have been 3,999,004 claims made to Universal Credit. As of 24th December 2021, 149,763 have been suspended under the Risk Review Process, a percentage of 3.74%.

**[UIN 97004](#), tabled on 4 January 2022**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit claims that have been suspended under the Risk Review process have been closed under suspicion of fraud as of 24 December 2021.**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

**[UIN 97005](#), tabled on 4 January 2022**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many claims suspended under the Risk Review process have been reinstated as of 24 December 2021.**

Approximately 3% of cases reviewed under the Risk Review Process between May 2020 and the beginning of January 2022 have been re-instated.

**[UIN 107657](#), tabled on 19 January 2022**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2022 to Question 97000 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, how many claims remain suspended by the Risk Review Team despite the claimants having now engaged with the team and provided all requested evidence.**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

**[UIN 107659](#), tabled on 19 January 2022**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2022 to Question 97003 on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, how many of the 149,763 cases that had been suspended under the Risk Review Process as of 24 December 2021, have now been closed after a decision was made that the claim was made fraudulently.**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

### [UIN 125359](#), tabled on 18 February 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claims remain suspended under the Risk Review Process as of February 2022.**

As of 17th February 2022, 174,000 claims have been suspended under the Risk Review Process, a percentage of 3.1%. Of the 174,000 claims suspended, Risk Review Team have de-suspended 5,346 claims.

Note: The figures provided have been sourced from internal DWP management information, intended only to help the Department to manage its business and has not been subject to the same quality assurance checks applied to our published official statistics.

### [UIN 125360](#), tabled on 18 February 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many universal credit claims have been closed by the Risk Review Team as a result of fraudulent activity as of 18 February 2022.**

The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

### [UIN 125361](#), tabled on 18 February 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department collects data on the number of claims reviewed by the Risk Review Team that have been closed as a result of fraudulent activity.**

The data is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

## Demographics

### [UIN 78474](#), tabled on 19 November 2021

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many benefit claims were suspended as a consequence of the Risk Review Team investigating those claims, by claimant nationality, in each month from January 2015 to November 2021.**

The Risk Review Team (RRT) was created in May 2020 as a direct response to threats identified by the Department's Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service (IRIS).

IRIS brings together the Department's Risk and Intelligence Service, our Cyber Resilience Team and our co-ordination of our response to Serious and Organised Crime activity.

Last year, IRIS coordinated the detection of, and response to, fraud risks from organised crime groups seeking to exploit COVID-19, which meant that systematic attacks on the benefit system were detected and shut down. In this way cyber colleagues prevented an attack by organised criminals in which would have seen £1.9 billion in benefits being paid to people trying to scam the system.

The role of the Risk Review Team is to review and take action on cases identified by IRIS as being a high fraud risk. A monthly breakdown of cases where benefit was re-instated following suspension is not available, however approximately 3% of cases reviewed under the Risk Review Process have been reinstated. All other cases will remain suspended pending investigation or closure.



The average length of claim suspension because of the Risk Review Team activity is not available. However, the length of time that a claim is suspended is largely dependent on the engagement of the claimant and the timely provision of any information requested. Where a customer does contact us and provides the information requested, we have processes in place to ensure people's payments are put back into payment as soon as possible.

The Risk Review Team does not capture demographic data on any claims they suspend and, as such, no information can be provided on nationality. Any Universal Credit claim that is suspended as a consequence of the Risk Review Team activity is notified by journal and text messages, along with a means by which a claimant can contact the Department and speak to the agent responsible for that case.

**[UIN 84428](#), tabled on 30 November 2021**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment her Department has made of the impact of Risk Review Team activities on claimants with specific nationality, ethnic or religious backgrounds.**

The Risk Review Team does not capture demographic data on any claims they review.

**[UIN 96999](#), tabled on 4 January 2022**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether the majority of claimants who have had their benefits suspended under the Risk Review process are Bulgarian nationals.**

The Risk Review Team does not capture demographic data on any claims they suspend. All claims subject to the Risk Review Process are suspected of fraud. This is not linked to nationality.

**[UIN 107653](#), tabled on 19 January 2022**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, for what reason her Department's Risk Review Team does not capture demographic data on any claims they suspend.**

The Risk Review Team does not capture demographic data because it is not relevant to the fraud risk identified by our Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service, which uses detection methods that are agnostic of nationality and other demographic data, to identify risk and fraud within the benefits system.

The specific methods employed are sensitive and, as such, we are not able to provide the mechanics of how they are identified. By putting such methods or the guidance in the public domain, we would risk undermining the ability of DWP to detect and counter fraudulent threats.

**[UIN 110483](#), tabled on 24 January 2022**

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has shared data provided by people who applied for pre-settled status with the Risk Review Team.**

The Department has not used any demographic data to influence or determine what cases are referred to the Risk Review Team.

## Equality Issues

[UIN 96989](#), tabled on 4 January 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2021 to Question 84427 on Social Security Benefit: Disqualification and with reference to the 149,057 cases that were suspended under the Risk Review Process, what steps her Department has taken to ensure the process of suspension does not result in the discrimination of claimants and is compliant with the Equality Act 2010.**

The Risk Review Team does not capture demographic data on any claims they suspend. All claims subject to the Risk Review Process are suspected of fraud. This is not linked to nationality.

[UIN 110480](#), tabled on 24 January 2022

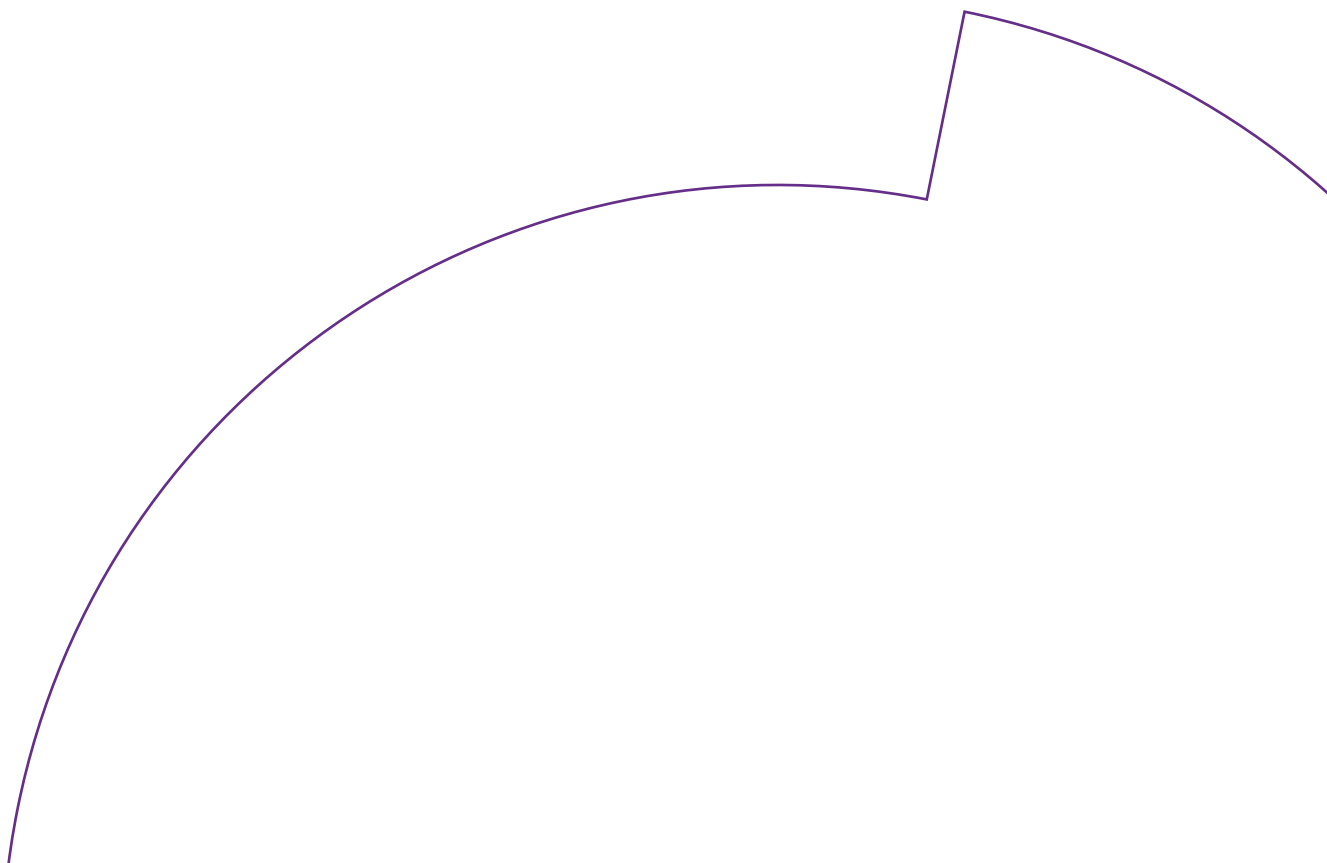
**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 12 January 2022 to Question 96989, on Social Security Benefits: Disqualification, whether the Risk Review Team has undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment; and if she will publish the outcome of that assessment.**

No demographic data has been used to determine if a case is referred to the Risk Review Team, therefore no Equality Assessment was required.

[UIN 117856](#), tabled on 3 February 2022

**To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department has undertaken an assessment or consideration of its duties under the Equalities Act 2010 in relation to the Risk Review Team.**

No demographic data or protected characteristics are used to determine if a case is referred to the Risk Review Team, therefore no Equality Assessment was required.







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