

HM TREASURY

HM REVENUE & CUSTOMS

**2015-2016 Annual Report from the Commissioners for Revenue and
Customs to the Treasury on Tax Credits under Section 40 of the Tax
Credits Act 2002**

Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section 40(2) of the Tax Credits Act 2002

February 2017

REPORT REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 40 OF THE TAX CREDITS ACT 2002

Section 40(1) of the Tax Credits Act 2002 (as amended by the Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Act 2005) requires the Commissioners for Revenue and Customs to make to the Treasury an annual Report about:

- The number of awards of each tax credit made in the year;
- The number of enquiries conducted under section 19;
- The number of penalties imposed; and
- The number of prosecutions and convictions for offences connected with tax credits.

Section 40(2) requires the Treasury to publish the annual Report and lay a copy before both Houses of Parliament.

The table overleaf shows:

- a) The number of awards of tax credits.

This is based on information processed by 5 April 2016. Not all information for 2015-16 is yet finalised at the time of production of this report. The average number of recipients in the year, based on this final information, is planned for publication in May 2017. The figures quoted in this report were published in HMRC's Child and Working Tax Credits statistics as at 2 April 2016. The figures include out of work families with children receiving CTC, but does not include families receiving 'family support' through the benefits administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (i.e. Income Support and income based Jobseekers Allowance).

- b) Number of enquiries conducted under section 19.

Section 19 of the Tax Credits Act 2002 allows the Board to carry out enquiries into awards after the end of the year, once they have been finalised. There were 25,755 enquiries conducted in 2015-16. In the previous year (2014-15) there were 20,714 enquiries.

- c) Number of penalties imposed.

In 2015-16 there were 16,266 cases where a penalty was imposed for tax credit related offences. This compares with 14,335 cases in 2014-15. HMRC collects data on the number of individual penalties imposed: for 2015-16 there were 17,577 individual penalties, compared with 15,787 in 2014-15. Where a case or award is a joint or household claim, two penalty notices can be given, split equally between the couple (individual penalties).

- d) Number of prosecutions and convictions for offences connected with tax credits.

For serious offences, HMRC continues to adopt a policy of selective prosecutions and publicises the results. There were 241 prosecutions and 238 convictions for tax credits in 2015-16 compared with 197 prosecutions and 184 convictions in 2014-15.

REPORT REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 40 OF THE TAX CREDITS ACT 2002 FOR THE TAX YEAR 2015-16

	Working Tax Credit (WTC)	Child Tax Credit (CTC)	Total
a) The number of awards of tax credits (thousands)	2,374	3,864	4,382 ¹
b) Number of enquiries conducted under section 19			25,755 ²
c) Number of penalties imposed (cases)			16,266 ³

	Prosecutions	Convictions
d) Number of prosecutions and convictions for offences connected with tax credits	241	238

¹ Awards with positive amounts for both WTC and/or CTC are included in each of the first two columns but counted only once in the final column. These figures are published in HMRC's Child and Working Tax Credit statistics for April 2016.

² The total figure cannot be broken down into CTC and WTC because a case may involve both. This figure also includes Section 20 enquiries (where an enquiry is made twelve months or more from the end of the relevant tax year). This figure cannot be broken down to show Section 19 separately.

³ The total figure cannot be broken down into CTC and WTC because a case may involve both.

