

Freedom of Information request 2013-1075

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Information request

“As time is short you can restrict this scope to Scotland, however, I have sent a copy of this request to Margaret Hodge MP Chair of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, who might be able to assist me if you cannot, and also will ask her committee separately to investigate this matter UK wide. I would like to know the figures of sanctions imposed over a number of years, from 2009 to 2010, on to 2011, 2012 and if any figures exist for 2013. I require figures not just for these whom have Appealed or are Appealing, but covering ALL sanctions imposed by the DWP. Also, if figures are available, I would like to know if whether those victims of sanctions/punishments are first, second, to third time etc., etc...offenders and still further, and while of course not asking for anyone's name, what was the offence typically on those sanction/punishment. And finally, what are the figures for Security Men/Women employed at jobcentres or over the last 24 months or stationed there as commissioned from external security companies. And have they increases lately?”

DWP response

In response to your first question please see the attached document (FOI 2013-1075 Response.xls) which gives figures the number of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Income Support for Lone Parents (ISLP) sanctions applied in Great Britain and Scotland by the reason for applying a sanction, year of decision and the number of times the claimant has been sanction for this reason in that year: 2009 - 2012

I can confirm that the Department does information on the number of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants who have been sanctioned. However, we estimate that the cost of complying with this part of your request would exceed the appropriate limit of £600.

The appropriate limit has been specified in regulations and for central Government it is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act the Department is not obliged to comply with this part of your request and we will not be processing this further.

For information:

The sanctions regime for people on Employment Support Allowance (ESA) in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) changed from the beginning of December 2012. As a result of the changes to the regime, the Department for Work and Pensions has reviewed its methodology for publishing ESA sanctions official statistics with a view to ensuring the publication remains relevant whilst also seeking to maintain a consistent time series.

In comparing methodologies, an error was discovered in the current official statistics measure leading to double counting of some sanctions. For this reason, statisticians at the DWP have decided to suspend publication of ESA sanctions statistics based on the current method. The DWP will publish the first set of statistics for the new ESA sanctions regime in May 2013 alongside a revised historical series and a working paper explaining the differences between the methodologies.

In response to your second question, since 1998 the Department for Work and Pensions occupies the majority of its accommodation under a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) known as the PRIME Contract. Under the terms of this PFI the Department leases back fully serviced accommodation from its private sector partner Telereal Trillium. This covers a variety of facility management services, including the provision of security guards.

Telereal Trillium has confirmed that 226 security guards were employed in Jobcentres in Scotland as at January 2011. At January 2012 there were 222, and at January 2013 there were 223.