

Freedom of Information request 2012-4356

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Information request

On the Andrew Marr show Sunday 4th November the Minister Mr Ian Duncan-Smith said

1. There are two and three generations within families that have never worked,

How many such families are there in the UK and which county or geographical region are they in?

2. he also said

"when we came to power we were paying more than £100,000 pa in housing benefit to families in London,

How many families were there in central London, Outer London, and in other regions of the UK?

DWP response

In response to question 1 of your request;

Specific information on the number of families where two and three generations have never worked is not readily available. We estimate that the cost of researching this piece of information for 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.

However a research report was produced by the University of Bristol in 2011 looking at this issue. This reports that there are pockets in Britain where there are two and three generations of families who are unemployed. This report can be found here:

www.bristol.ac.uk/cmpo/publications/papers/2011/wp278.pdf

In response to question 2 of your request;

The following table shows the number of housing benefit recipients with a recorded weekly award of £1,917 or more a week, from November 2008 and

August 2012. This would be the equivalent of more than £100,000 a year if they remained on this amount continuously for a year.

Payment information is sourced from the administering local authority once a decision has been made on amount of Housing Benefit awarded. The decision is based on details entered on the Housing Benefit claim form and supporting evidence.

It is possible that errors can occur in the recording of weekly award (both on a form and inputting onto a computer system within the local authority that is processing the claim).

In particular, it is possible that, for some claimant records, the monthly award may be recorded instead of the weekly award. Therefore, care should be taken when looking at high weekly award bands.

Housing Benefit Recipients with a recorded weekly award of £1,917 or more, November 2008 - August 2012

	Total	Central London	Greater London	Rest of GB
Nov-08	-	-	-	-
Dec-08	-	-	-	-
Jan-09	-	-	-	-
Feb-09	-	-	-	-
Mar-09	-	-	-	-
Apr-09	-	-	-	-
May-09	-	-	-	-
Jun-09	-	-	-	-
Jul-09	-	-	-	-
Aug-09	-	-	-	-
Sep-09	-	-	-	-
Oct-09	10	-	-	-
Nov-09	-	-	-	-
Dec-09	-	-	-	-
Jan-10	-	-	-	-
Feb-10	-	-	-	-
Mar-10	-	-	-	-
Apr-10	-	-	-	-
May-10	-	-	-	-
Jun-10	-	-	-	-
Jul-10	-	-	-	-
Aug-10	-	-	-	-
Sep-10	10	10	-	-
Oct-10	10	10	-	-
Nov-10	10	10	-	-
Dec-10	10	10	-	-

Jan-11	10	10	-	-
Feb-11	10	10	-	-
Mar-11	10	10	-	-
Apr-11	10	10	-	-
May-11	10	10	-	-
Jun-11	10	10	-	-
Jul-11	10	10	-	-
Aug-11	10	10	-	-
Sep-11	10	10	-	-
Oct-11	10	10	-	-
Nov-11	10	10	-	-
Dec-11	10	10	-	-
Jan-12	10	10	-	-
Feb-12	10	10	-	-
Mar-12	10	10	-	-
Apr-12	10	10	-	-
May-12	10	10	-	-
Jun-12	10	10	-	-
Jul-12	10	10	-	-
Aug-12	-	-	-	-

Source: Single Housing Benefit Extract 100% individual level data (SHBE)

Notes:

1. Recipients are at the second Thursday of the month.
2. Components may not sum to total due to independent rounding.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
4. '-' denotes nil or negligible
5. SHBE is a monthly electronic scan of claimant level data direct from local authority computer systems. The data is available monthly from November 2008 and August 2012 is the latest available.

Methodology: Data is collected on a monthly basis and released as the Single Housing Benefit Extract 100% level data (SHBE). This provides the weekly housing benefit amount for each individual household. The annualised amounts are then calculated by multiplying by 52.18.

Information on individual level weekly benefit amounts prior to November 2008 is not held by the Department.