

Freedom of Information request 2013-176

Received 14th January 2013

Published 26th February 2013

Information request

1. Can you tell me how many families in the UK (with five children or more) are in receipt JSA, IB, Severe disablement allowance, income support, ESA or pension credit? And can you tell me how much money is paid out by the DWP to these families for these benefits weekly?
2. Out of the family total (part one) can you tell me how many have five, six, seven, eight, etc children?
3. Can you also answer the two previous questions specifically for Scotland?
4. Can you tell me what the total amount of money that is paid out in benefits by the DWP every week is?
5. Out of this total (question 4) can you tell me how much is paid out on each day? (i.e £X in JSA paid on Monday, £X in IB paid on Monday etc)
6. For the previous two questions can you also break down the figure for Scotland specifically?
7. Can you also tell me for the years 2012, 2011, 2010 and 2009 how many people your dept. investigated for benefit fraud across the UK and specifically Scotland was?
8. Out of this total can you tell me how many suspected frauds were referred to the police and Crown Office?

DWP response

In response to your questions the Department does not hold this information for the whole of the United Kingdom (UK). We do however hold some information for Great Britain, which is detailed below.

You may be interested to know that the responsibility for statistics in Northern Ireland lies with the Department for Social Development (DSD). Information on how to submit a Freedom of Information request to the DSD can be found at:

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/freedom-of-information/requesting-information.htm>

In response to questions 1a and 2, Section 21 of the Act allows us to direct you to information which is already reasonably accessible to you.

The Department answered a request under the Freedom of Information Act on the 19th of September 2012 titled: **Number of children in out of work benefit households: May 2011** which can be used in answer to your questions and can be found via the link below (Reference: 2012-3222):

http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/PQ_FOI/index.php?page=foi

In response to questions 1b and 3 (regarding the amount of weekly benefit);

I can confirm that the Department may hold some information falling within the description specified in your request. However, we estimate that the cost of complying with 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 your request and we will not be processing your request further.

In response to question 3 (regarding the number of children) please see the table below.

Number of Out of Work Benefit Claimant Households in Scotland, who also claim Child Benefit by Number of Children and Benefit Type: May 2011

Number of Children	All Out of work Benefits	JSA	IB/SDA	IS	ESA	PC
5	1,270	210	230	910	100	10
6	390	60	70	280	30	-
7	130	20	40	100	10	-
8	60	10	10	40	10	-
9	10	-	-	10	-	-

All other figures for the Number of Households, where the Number of Children is greater than 9, are nil or negligible.

Source: DWP WPLS 100% data and HMRC Child Benefit administrative data.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten; “-“ denotes nil or negligible. Some additional disclosure controls have also been applied. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Data represent a snapshot as at 31 May 2011. They are badged as Official Statistics. Background guidance on the use and interpretation of the figures is available at:
http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/ben_hholds/cb_hholds_guidance.pdf
3. **Benefit Type:** Data represent the number of children dependent on a parent or guardian who is claiming one or a combination of the following out-of-work benefits: Income Support (IS), Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA), and Pension Credit (PC).

In response to questions 4 and 6a, Section 21 of the Act allows us to direct you to information which is already reasonably accessible to you.

The Department publishes statistics on Benefit expenditure which can be found via the following link:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/index.php?page=expenditure>

To access Benefit expenditure tables by Country select the link above and from the **Benefit Expenditure Outturn** section select the **Tables showing benefit expenditure by country, region and local authority** link. The latest available data is from 2000/2001 to 2011/2012. Please note to get the weekly amount of benefits you will need to divide the annual figure by 52 (e.g. annual figure / 52 = weekly amount).

In response to questions 5 and 6b, please see the attached files 'DWP DAILY BENEFIT SPEND AUG11.xls' and 'DWP DAILY BENEFIT SPEND AUG11 - SCOTLAND.xls' included with this reply.

Please note the figures provided are a weekly snapshot from August 2011, which is line with other published statistics on these benefits. There will be some variation in payment amounts from one week to the next. This will be for a number of reasons including changing benefit rates and the different payment cycles e.g. weekly, fortnightly, seasonal. Therefore these figures should be treated with caution.

In response to question 7, the Fraud Investigation Service (FIS), part of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for the investigation of allegations of fraudulent activity against all benefits administered by DWP. It investigates in situations where there has been a significant loss to public funds and where evidence might result in a criminal penalty.

The table below shows the number of investigations closed by FIS for the fiscal years 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, identifying the number for Great Britain and the portion closed by Scotland. Reports of alleged benefit fraud initially investigated by FIS might subsequently be referred to Customer Compliance (CC) action at any time if it is clear that a criminal penalty would not be appropriate. In these cases CC will regularise the benefit, ensure the customer is aware of the rules and instigate the recovery of the overpayment. The data provided does not include those cases closed by CC.

Number of investigations closed by FIS by year

Investigations Closed		
Year	Great Britain	Scotland
2008 - 2009	129,190	13,730
2009 - 2010	150,980	15,740
2010 - 2011	155,590	15,320
2011 - 2012	166,010	15,780

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

In response to question 8, Investigations which merit prosecution are referred to the relevant Prosecution Authority in which the offence was committed. In Scotland, the Procurator Fiscal and in England and Wales, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Prior to April 2012, the prosecution authority for England and Wales was an in-house Department

The number of cases referred for consideration of prosecution are shown below for years 2008 – 2009, 2009 – 2010, 2010 – 2011 and 2011 – 2012 identifying the number nationally and the portion progressed by Scotland.

Number of cases referred for consideration of prosecution by year

Referred to Prosecution Authority		
Year	Great Britain	Scotland
2008 - 2009	11,410	1,020
2009 - 2010	10,780	1,060
2010 - 2011	11,040	1,160
2011 - 2012	10,360	980

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

DWP FIS work in partnership with the Police ensuring a cohesive approach to the prevention and detection of fraud against DWP benefits and the national insurance system. Those joint cases are captured within the data provided.

On occasions where there is more than one offence and that offence identified by the Police is serious and is not covered by DWP legislation, the Police will take lead on both offences and the DWP offence is handed off to the Police to progress for prosecution. This number is likely to be few but we are unable to provide you with the precise number because this information is not routinely collated and we estimate that the cost of complying with this 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 3.5 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 your request and we will not be processing this part of your request further.

The prime system for FIS is the Fraud Referral and Interventions Management System (FRAIMS). The information supplied by the Department has not been subjected to the rigorous quality assurance checks applied to our published official statistics as we do not intend to release it into the public domain. It is therefore possible this information may change due to operational reasons and we recommend that caution be applied when using it.