

Freedom of Information request 2012-4672

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Information request

1. The number of claimants who received sanctions by Jobcentreplus for the period 1st January to 31 October 2012
2. The number of claimants who were not paid ESA payments because of a sanction for the same period

DWP response

In response to question 1 the latest available sanctions figures for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants and Lone Parents (LP) claiming Income Support (IS) are given in the tables below.

The number of individuals who had a JSA sanction applied in Great Britain: 1st January 2012 – 30th April 2012

Number of individuals with a JSA sanction applied²	Total
	210,230

Source: DWP Information, Governance and Security Directorate: JSA Sanctions and Disallowance Decisions Statistics Database.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten.
2. Data to 30 April 2012 is the latest available information
3. The number of sanctions applied is the number of Varied³, Fixed Length⁴ and Entitlement Decision⁵ referrals where there has been an adverse decision.
4. **Varied Length sanctions:** A sanction of between 1 week and 26 weeks is imposed for leaving employment voluntarily without just cause, refusing employment without good cause, or losing employment through misconduct. The actual period in each case is at the discretion of the Adjudication Officer who makes the decision.
5. **Fixed Length sanctions:** A sanction of between 1 week and 26 weeks is imposed for refusal, without good cause, to attend an employment programme or carry out a Jobseeker's Direction. Payment of benefit continues in full pending the Adjudication Officer's decision on a sanction question.
6. **Entitlement Decisions:** These are questions on which entitlement to JSA depends. For example, if there is doubt around whether the

Jobseeker's agreement (JSAg) is suitable, whether they are actively looking for work or making themselves available for work. In most cases payment of JSA will be suspended by benefit processing until the doubt is resolved.

7. Whilst claiming JSA, a customer can have a Labour Market 'doubt' raised against their claim. LM doubts are normally identified by staff at the Jobcentre Plus office and are referred to the Sector Decision Makers (SDMs). Once the SDM has made a decision on whether to sanction or disallow/allow a referral, they enter their decision on a system called DMAS (Decision Making and Appeals System). The decision is also sent back to the Jobcentre Plus office for entry to LMS (Labour Market System) and JSAPS (JSA Payment System) which then makes the appropriate changes to the actual payment to the customer.

The number of individuals on Income Support (Lone Parents) who had a sanction applied in Great Britain: 1st January 2012 – 30th June 2012

Number of individuals with a ISLP sanction applied	Total
	27,110

Source: Income Support Computer System (ISCS) data

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. Data to June 2012 is the latest available published information:

http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/is/lone_parent_regime/index.php?page=lone_parent_regime

In response to question 2 regarding the number of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants who have been sanctioned I can confirm that the Department does hold some information falling within the description specified in your request. However, as a result of an error found in the methodology used to derive the number of ESA claimants who have been sanctioned, 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.

More information on the ESA sanctions issue mentioned above can be found at:

http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa_sanc