

# Freedom of Information request 2014-4972

Date received 13 November 2014

Date of response 09 February 2014

## Information request

A)

i) Over the period 22 October 2012 to 30 June 2014, how many individual JSA claimants received a 3-year sanction for repeated 'high level' failures?

(ii) Of these individuals, how many asked for reconsideration or appealed to a Tribunal in respect of any of the three failures leading to the 3-year sanction?

Please give the answer to question (ii) in the following format:

- no. who requested reconsideration in respect of none of the failures
- no. who requested reconsideration in respect of one of the failures
- no. who requested reconsideration in respect of two of the failures
- no. who requested reconsideration in respect of all three of the failures
- no. who made a Tribunal appeal in respect of none of the failures
- no. who made a Tribunal appeal in respect of one of the failures
- no. who made a Tribunal appeal in respect of two of the failures
- no. who made a Tribunal appeal in respect of all three of the failures

B)

How many individual JSA claimants received the following numbers of sanctions, of whatever level (i.e. disregarding any distinction between low, intermediate and high level sanctions), during the 12 months to 30 June 2014:

One sanction at any level

Two sanctions at any level

Three sanctions at any level

Four sanctions at any level

Five sanctions at any level

Six sanctions at any level

Seven sanctions at any level

Eight sanctions at any level

Nine sanctions at any level

Ten or more sanctions at any level

C)

The DWP Freedom of Information response 2012-4383 of 21 December 2012 gave the number of individuals who had a JSA sanction applied in Great Britain at any time during the five years to 31 March 2012 and the percentage this figure represented of the total number of individuals claiming JSA over the same period. Fol response 2012-5156 of 14 January 2013 gave the number of individuals who had a JSA sanction applied in Great Britain in each of the five financial years 2007-08 to 2011-12 and what percentage these figures represented of the total number of individuals claiming JSA during each financial year.

Please would you provide the same information for the period 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2014.

In addition, I understand that the information previously published for 2007-12 now needs correction due to changes to the DWP's database. Please would you provide the corrected figures.

## **DWP response**

Please note that the intention of the sanctions system is to encourage people to engage with the support being offered by Jobcentres by making it clearer to claimants what they are expected to do in return for their benefits. Sanctions are a necessary part of the benefits system used only as a last resort and the overwhelming majority of claimants do not receive a sanction.

In response to part A of your request, we can confirm that the Department does hold some information on the number of individuals who have received a high-level sanction. However to provide an answer would require us to combine information from multiple data sources and we therefore estimate that the cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate limit.

We therefore 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 (FOIA) the Department is not obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing it further.

Under section 16 of the FOIA we are obliged to assist you in providing options to narrow your request, by reforming or refocusing it, so that it will fall beneath the cost limit. In this case due to the complexity of the issues involved in performing the necessary analysis described above we are unable to offer you any advice.

However, under Section 21 of the FOIA there is some information that is reasonably accessible to you which gives some limited information on the length of sanctions applied, for the new sanctions system, which started on 22 October 2012. The relevant guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobseekers-allowance-overview-of-sanctions-rules>

A table showing the number of Individuals receiving an adverse JSA sanction decision by decision levels and number of sanctions can be found in Table 1.7

of the latest statistical release on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) sanctions decisions which can be accessed via the link here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/jobseekers-allowance-sanctions>

The full statistics cover both (i) total decisions made (i.e. if an individual has had multiple sanctions decisions made, all of those sanction decisions made will be included in the tables), and (ii) individuals who have had a sanction decision made (i.e. will only 'count' one individual in a table defined and produced). These statistics also contain a wide set of geographical areas, sanction reason, sanctions appeals and outcomes and if required this information can be extracted using Stat-Xplore via the following link:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract information required from Stat-Xplore can be found at:

[https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Stat-Xplore\\_User\\_Guide.htm](https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Stat-Xplore_User_Guide.htm)

In response to part B of your request, the requested information is shown in the table below.

**Please note that the statistics are derived from unpublished information which has not been quality assured to Official Statistics publication standards. They should therefore be treated with caution.**

**Total number of individuals who received one or more Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) adverse sanction decisions, in Great Britain: 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014**

<b>Number of Adverse Sanctions Decisions</b>	<b>Sanction Decisions - Individuals</b>
One adverse sanction decision	372,461
Two adverse sanction decisions	99,621
Three adverse sanction decisions	35,170
Four adverse sanction decisions	14,873
Five adverse sanction decisions	7,103
Six adverse sanction decisions	3,755
Seven adverse sanction decisions	2,126
Eight adverse sanction decisions	1,381
Nine adverse sanction decisions	852
Ten or more adverse sanction decisions	1,881
Total	539,225

**Source:**

DWP Sanctions and Disallowance Decisions Statistics Database

**Notes:**

1. Cells in this table have had statistical disclosure control applied to avoid the release of confidential data. Therefore totals may not be the sum of the individual cells.
2. Figures are to 30 June 2014, which is the latest data available.
3. Adverse: An adverse decision is a decision to apply a sanction i.e. a decision found against the claimant so a sanction is applied or the JSA claim is closed (disallowance).
4. JSA claimants who have had more than one sanction applied in the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 will only be counted once in the figures above.
5. Please note that the proportions are derived from unpublished information which have not been quality assured to Official Statistics publication standards. They should therefore be treated with caution.

In response to part C of your request, the requested information is shown in the table below.

**Please note that the proportions are derived from unpublished information which have not been quality assured to Official Statistics publication standards. They should therefore be treated with caution.**

**Total number of individuals who a) received Jobseeker's Allowance and b) received at least one JSA adverse sanction decision, at any time during April 2009 and 31 March 2014 and at any time in each year in Great Britain: April 2007 to March 2014**

<b>Financial Years</b>	<b>Number of individuals claiming JSA</b>	<b>Number of individuals receiving an adverse JSA sanction</b>	<b>Percentage of the total number of individuals claiming JSA</b>
<b>09/10 to 13/14</b>	8,232,560	1,833,035	22%
<b>2007/2008</b>	2,177,900	256,021	12%
<b>2008/2009</b>	2,935,950	286,694	10%
<b>2009/2010</b>	3,576,580	386,979	11%
<b>2010/2011</b>	3,470,100	523,042	15%
<b>2011/2012</b>	3,484,940	460,780	13%

<b>2012/2013</b>	3,492,890	557,858	16%
<b>2013/2014</b>	3,097,630	568,430	18%

**Source:**

DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS), Stat-Xplore

**Notes:**

1. JSA figures are rounded to the nearest ten. Percentages are shown to the nearest whole number. JSA sanction figures in this table have had statistical disclosure control applied to avoid the release of confidential data.
2. Individuals claiming JSA are those who have had at least one live computerised claim at any point throughout the period 1 April to 31 March and will only be counted once in the figures above.
3. JSA claimants who have had more than one sanction applied in the period 1 April to 31 March will only be counted once in the figures above.
4. Please note that the proportions are derived from unpublished information which have not been quality assured to Official Statistics publication standards. They should therefore be treated with caution.