

Freedom of Information request 2013-4072

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Information request

I am interested in finding out how many Unemployment Benefit Claimants (JSA Claimants) had their benefit payments questioned and/or stopped because they were deemed unavailable to work between 1997-2010 (or at least between 2007-2010). Specifically, for the same time period, I would like to know how many claimants were deemed unavailable to work because they were volunteering.

DWP response

In response to your first question the information requested from **2000 to 2010** is shown in the table below.

Number¹ of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants with a disallowance referral and of which those who had a disallowance applied² by referral reason: 1st April 2000 to 31st December 2010

Referral reason	Number of claimants with a disallowance referral	Of which those who had a disallowance applied²
Not Actively Seeking Employment	324,730	248,770

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

Notes:

1. Figures are cumulative and rounded to the nearest ten.
2. The number of disallowances applied is the number of Entitlement Decision³ disallowance referrals where the decision was found against the claimant.
3. **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.

We can confirm that the Department does hold some information falling within the description specified in your request prior to 1st April 2000. However we estimate the cost of locating, retrieving and extracting this information would exceed the appropriate limit of £600.

In response to your second question on "**how many claimants were deemed unavailable to work because they were volunteering**" we can confirm that the Department may hold some information falling within the description specified in your request. If a claimant fails to undertake any activity required as a condition of their claim, without good cause, then a doubt may be raised against it.

These doubts are recorded on the department's computer systems, however not to the level of detail requested. Therefore to provide an answer would require us to do a manual search of each individual claimant's record to determine whether this information exists. 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 the Department is not obliged to comply with these parts your request and we will not be processing them further.