

Freedom of Information request 657/2013

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Information request

information sent out in benefits communications state the amounts needed for a person to live on.

how is this calculated?

how is the difference between people under 25 and over 25 justified?

DWP response

In response to your question, Income-related benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance are paid at a rate set by Parliament each year. The amount is intended to cover day to day living expenses. The amount of benefit payable depends on the individual circumstances of the claimant and their family, but the basic personal allowance for working age income related benefits in 2012/13 is:

- £71.00 for single person, 25 and over,
- £56.25 for those under 25
- £111.45 - couple, both 18 and over

There are variants for couples please see attached for further information:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/benefitrates2012.pdf>

The schedule of proposed benefits rates from April 2013 can be found below:

<http://data.parliament.uk/DepositedPapers/Files/DEP2012-1830/ScheduleofproposedbenefitratesfromApril2013.pdf>

The levels of benefit needs to take account of the competing demands on public expenditure and work incentives. Benefits are not made up of separate amounts for specific items of expenditure such as food or fuel charges, and beneficiaries are free to spend their benefit as they see fit, in the light of their individual needs and preferences.

You have also asked how the difference for those under 25 and over 25 justified - the lower levels of personal allowances for younger, single people under 25 take account of the fact that the majority of this group live in someone else's household and can be assumed to have fewer financial responsibilities than those who are older and more likely to live independently. The rates also reflect the lower earnings expectations of younger people.

For couples, in recognition of their independent status, there is not an age

divide above 18. As long as one of the couple is aged 18 or over, the normal personal allowance for couples is applied.