

# Freedom of Information request 2015-3480

Date received 20 August 2015

Date of response 17 November 2015

## Information request

1) Please can the DWP provide statistics (absolute numbers and percentage of claimants) for the last 5 years on the amount of people in Wales who have lost all or part of their benefits for having sanctions imposed on them.

2) Could the above information be broken down into each of the following benefits:

- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Universal Credit
- Employment and Support Allowance (and you're in the work-related activity group)
- Income Support

## DWP response

Please note that the intention of sanctions 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. The overwhelming majority of benefit claimants take up the jobs support we offer, with a small minority facing a sanction for not doing so.

In response your request for information on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), and Income Support (IS) the requested information is shown in the tables 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**Please note that the proportions are derived from unpublished information which have not been quality assured to Official Statistics publication standards.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.**

**Table 1: Total number of individuals who a) received Jobseeker's Allowance and b) received at least one JSA adverse sanction decision at any time in each year in Wales: April 2010 to March 2015**

<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>2010/2011</b>	179,760	27,372	15%
<b>2011/2012</b>	182,440	25,341	14%
<b>2012/2013</b>	185,990	27,798	15%
<b>2013/2014</b>	168,400	27,907	17%
<b>2014/2015</b>	138,620	18,413	13%

**Table 2: Total number of individuals who a) were in the work related activity group while claiming ESA and b) received at least one ESA adverse sanction decision at any time in each year in Wales: April 2010 to March 2015**

<b>Financial Years</b>	<b>Number of individuals claiming ESA in WRAG</b>	<b>Number of individuals receiving an adverse ESA sanction</b>	<b>Percentage of the total number of individuals claiming ESA in WRAG</b>
<b>2010/2011</b>	12,250	985	8%
<b>2011/2012</b>	19,580	300	2%
<b>2012/2013</b>	35,070	594	2%
<b>2013/2014</b>	40,880	1,165	3%
<b>2014/2015</b>	40,700	1,185	3%

**Table 3: Total number of individuals who a) were lone parents claiming IS and b) received at least one IS adverse sanction decision at any time in each year in Wales: April 2010 to March 2015**

<b>Financial Years</b>	<b>Number of lone parents claiming IS</b>	<b>Number of lone parent individuals receiving an adverse IS sanction</b>	<b>Percentage of the total number of lone parents claiming IS</b>
<b>2010/2011</b>	56,100	3,829	7%
<b>2011/2012</b>	51,330	3,410	6%
<b>2012/2013</b>	47,790	2,245	5%
<b>2013/2014</b>	40,090	1,745	4%
<b>2014/2015</b>	37,160	1,867	5%

**Source:**

DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS)  
JSA and ESA sanction decisions - Stat-Xplore  
Income Support Computer System (ISCS)

**Notes:**

1. Figures in this table have had statistical disclosure control applied to avoid the release of confidential data. Percentages are shown to the nearest whole number.
2. Individuals claiming each benefit are those who have had at least one live computerised claim at any point throughout the period 1 April to 31 March for each year and will only be counted once in each relevant year in the figures above.
3. Claimants who have had more than one sanction applied in the period 1 April to 31 March for each year will only be counted once in each relevant year in the figures above.
4. Only claimants in the ESA Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) can be sanctioned.
5. To determine the number of sanctions applied to IS lone parents (ISLP) we compare consecutive weekly caseload scans taken from ISCS to identify the number of reductions in benefit with the same value as known sanction amounts. This sanctions information is merged with information on all ISLP claimants to verify that the sanctions data relates to a Lone Parent in receipt of Income Support.
6. ISLPs receive a fixed sanction of 20% of the personal allowance rate of a single claimant [not aged less than 25] for each failure to attend/participate in a Work Focused Interview until 10 pence is left in payment. This sanction lasts until the individual attends and participates in a Work Focused Interview. In the case where there is more than one sanction in place the claimant need only attend/participate in one Work Focused Interview in order for all related sanctions to be removed from their benefit.
7. 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 your request for information on Universal Credit, as the statistics are intended for future publication this information is exempt from disclosure under the terms of Section 22 (Information intended for future publication) of the FOIA. This exemption is qualified, and is therefore subject to a public interest test where the Department considers whether the balance of the public interest falls in favour of withholding or disclosing the information requested.

Whilst disclosure would improve transparency in the operations of the Department, it is in the public interest to adhere to the existing publication process for official statistics to ensure that the publication of official information is a properly planned and managed process and that the data are accurate once placed into the public domain. It is also in the public interest to ensure that the information is available to all members of the public at the same time and premature publication could undermine this principle.

On this occasion, the balance of the public interest test falls in favour of withholding this information. As explained above, statistics on this issue will be published in due course.