Freedom of Information request 2537/2013

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Information request

Please provide for 2012

1) How many/what percentage of JSA were sanctioned for a) lower level b) intermediate level c) higher level of sanction.

2) How many/what percentage of ESA were sanctioned for a) lower level b) intermediate level c) higher level of sanction.

3) How many ESA claims have in total nationally so far gone to mandatory reconsideration.

4) The average time it takes at present for a mandatory reconsideration nationally.

DWP response

1. In response to your first question, the latest available information for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) sanctions and disallowances is to the 21st October 2012 (the last date covered by the old sanctions regime) and can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/dwp-statistics-tabulation-tool

More information on the new sanctions regime, introduced from the 22nd of October, can be found at: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/adviser/updates/jsa-sanction-changes/

As the information requested covers the new sanctions regime and these statistics are intended for future publication they are therefore 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. The public interest test is where the Department considers whether the

balance of the public interest falls in favour of withholding or disclosing the information requested.

Arguments in favour of disclosure: There are public interest arguments in favour of disclosure of this information at the present time. Disclosure would for example improve transparency in the operations of the Department.

Arguments against disclosure: There are public interest arguments against disclosure of this information at the present time. These arguments include that it is in the public interest to adhere to the existing publication process for official statistics, which includes time for the data to be collated and properly verified.

It is also in the public interest to ensure that the publication of official information is a properly planned and managed process, to ensure 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 the principle of making the information available to all at the same time through the official publication process.

On this occasion, the balance of the public interest test falls in favour of withholding this information. As explained above, these statistics will be published in due course. Information on this publication will be provided here:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/release-calendar/index.html?newquery=*&lday=30&lmonth=5&lyear=2013&uday=&umonth=&uyear=&theme=&source-agency=Work+and+Pensions&pagetype=calendar-entry

2. The sanctions regime for people Employment Support Allowance (ESA) in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) changed from the beginning of December 2012. As a result of the changes to the regime, the Department reviewed its methodology for publishing ESA sanctions official statistics. The review identified an error in the official statistics measure leading to double counting of some sanctions. For this reason, statisticians at the DWP decided to suspend publication of ESA sanctions statistics. DWP is aiming to publish the first set of statistics for the new ESA sanctions regime by August 2013 alongside a revised historical series. These statistics have been delayed from a May release to allow the new regime to bed-in and to allow sufficient quality assurance.

3. None. Mandatory reconsideration doesn't apply to ESA until October 2014

4. Mandatory reconsideration only applies to UC and PIP at present. In the very short time since it has applied, too few cases have been considered to calculate a meaningful clearance time.