

# Freedom of Information request 554/2013

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## Information request

*I am looking to find out how benefit amounts are calculated.  
For example, is JSA based on essential living costs? If so, which ones?  
What are the figures used to calculate a total amount?  
To begin with, can you provide a breakdown of the JSA calculation  
please?  
Is this information available online anywhere?*

## DWP response

In response to your question, Income-related benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance are paid at a rate set by Parliament each year. The amount is intended to cover all normal 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.