

Freedom of Information request 1861/2012

Received 2 May 2012

Published 18 July 2012

Information request

Please provide the total amount in housing benefit per year paid to claimants in Swindon for each of the last three years.

Please provide a separate breakdown of claims at £20,000 or £40,000 and above

DWP response

In response to part one of your request: Section 21 of the Act allows us to direct you to information which is already reasonably accessible to you.

You can access official statistics on Housing Benefit expenditure by Local Authority at: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/index.php?page=expenditure> .

In response to part two of your request, the tables below provide breakdowns by average weekly award and annualised amounts.

Housing Benefit recipients in Swindon Unitary Authority (UA) by annual award band¹: Jan 2010 - Jan 2012

	January 2010	January 2011	January 2012
All	13,790	14,520	14,760
£0 to under £10,000	13,620	14,380	14,620
£10,000 to under £20,000	30	80	80
£20,000 to under £30,000	-	-	-
£30,000 to under £40,000	-	-	-
£40,000 and over	-	-	-
Missing HB Values	130	60	50

Housing Benefit recipients in Swindon UA by weekly award amount bands: January 2010 - January 2012

	January 2010	January 2011	January 2012
All	13,790	14,520	14,760
£0 to under £100	10,750	11,300	11,530
£100 to under £200	2,880	3,090	3,120
£200 to under £300	30	70	50
£300 and over	-	-	-
Missing HB Values	130	60	50

Housing Benefit recipients Average Weekly Award in Swindon UA January 2010 - January 2012

	January 2010	January 2011	January 2012
Average Weekly Award Amount Swindon UA	78.19	78.93	81.73

Source: Single Housing Benefit Extract 100% individual level data (SHBE) January 10, January 11 and January 12.

Notes:

1. The annualised amounts are calculated by multiplying average weekly Housing Benefit amounts for each individual household by 52.18.
2. Recipients are as at second Thursday of the month.
3. Components may not sum to total due to independent rounding.
4. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10. Average weekly award amounts are rounded to the nearest penny.
5. “-“denotes nil or negligible.
6. SHBE is a monthly electronic scan of claimant level data direct from local authority computer systems. It replaces quarterly aggregate clerical returns. The data is available monthly from November 2008 and January 2012.
7. Housing Benefit National Statistics are published on the Department’s website at: http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/hb_ctb/index.php?page=hbctb_arc .

The Government is reforming Housing Benefit to control Housing Benefit expenditure. Limits to the amount of Housing Benefit that people in the private and social rented sectors are entitled to, based on their household size, will encourage people to make sensible decisions about what they can reasonably afford, and encourage work incentives.

From April 2011 a number of changes have been made to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA). LHA rates are used to calculate Housing Benefit for most households renting in the private rented sector. In particular, LHA rates are now capped. The maximum weekly amount based on household size and bedroom entitlement is capped at:

- £250 per week for a one bedroom property,
- £290 per week for a two bedroom property,
- £340 per week for a three bedroom property,
- £400 per week for a four bedroom property.

The changes applied to new Housing Benefit-LHA claimants from April 2011. Existing Housing Benefit-LHA claimants have been given up to 9 months transitional protection from the review date of their claim so will be moved across gradually from January 2012.

These reforms are also intended to exert a downward pressure on rents in the private rented sector.

The limits outlined above are overall national limits, you may find it helpful to know that lower level local housing allowance rates can be obtained from relevant local authority websites (for example, rates for Swindon can be viewed at:

<http://www.swindon.gov.uk/ab/ab-benefits/housingbenefit/Pages/ab-benefits-housingbenefit-lha.aspx>).