

# Freedom of Information request 2333/2013

**Received 19 May**  
**Published**

## Information request

I am looking for information regarding the number of benefits claimants that have been on Mandatory Work Activity in the period from April 2012 to current. I also would like this figure broken down monthly, as well as a total. I also wish to know whether those on MWA are considered by yourselves DWP, and the ONS to be 'unemployed' or 'employed'.

## DWP response

The information on the number of benefit claimants that have been on Mandatory Work Activity by month is published and can be found at [http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/pwp/mwa\\_may13.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/pwp/mwa_may13.pdf)

In answer to the second part of your request, participants on Mandatory Work Activity still remain on Jobseeker's Allowance and as such would be considered part of the 'claimant count' - the Department's administrative measure of unemployment.

The total measure of unemployment is published by the Office for National Statistics. It is derived from the Labour Force Survey using definitions of employment, unemployment and inactivity which are based on the International Labour Organisation's guidelines.

Under those guidelines people on placements in a workplace, where goods and services are being produced, would be considered as 'employed'. However, respondents' classification is self-reported, so where people are recorded in the statistics depends on how they describe their activity. Some people may not report being on a government employment programme, and if they say they are actively seeking and available for work then they may be counted as unemployed anyway.

As Mandatory Work Activity placements only last four weeks, and the number of starts averages a couple of thousand each month, any effect on the level of employment or unemployment at a point in time is likely to be small.