

# Freedom of Information request 3318/2011

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## Information request

1. Please provide statistics of how many households there are in Horley, in total, and then how many of those households include claims to 1) incapacity benefit 2) housing benefits - please provide a number for each and only for persons under the age of 60 years.
2. Of those claiming incapacity benefit, please provide a number of how many have had medical assessments (i.e. visited a doctor).
3. Please provide a number of those, either per household or per person, on incapacity benefit in the road of Upfield (under 60 years). This should not constitute personal data as individuals would not be identified by a statistic.
4. Provide a £ figure of how much money is spent on incapacity benefit in Horley.
5. Please also provide what is the number of benefit fraud investigators in the County or town and how many claims have been found to be fraudulent within this area.

## DWP response

Please note that Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) replaced Incapacity Benefit for new claims from October 2008.

In responding to question 1, the information we have provided below uses estimated figures for benefit units. The information requested is not available at a household level. There may be more than one benefit unit per household. Please note that the data supplied are derived from unpublished information.

The Office for National Statistics has developed a set of Harmonised Primary Standards, which are concepts used on all or nearly all major government social surveys. The harmonised definition of a household for the purposes of analysis and publication is one person living alone; or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room or sitting room or dining area. A benefit unit however comprises precisely one or two adults (living together as a couple) plus any

dependent children they are living with. Hence a household may comprise one or more benefit units.

The derivation of benefit units from administrative data sources has a number of limitations based around the timeliness, inconsistency and accuracy of that data. For example it is difficult to identify couples where a number of adults live in a single property; a large number of potential couples identified under these circumstances are treated as single people. The approach used to assimilate data into benefit units is still under development. The data supplied therefore has not been quality assured to Official Statistics standard and are subject to change. Please treat the information supplied with caution.

The estimated number of benefit units in Horley, defined in this instance by the postcode RH6, which include, as at 1 June 2011, claims to:

- 1) Incapacity Benefit is 400
- 2) Employment and Support Allowance is 200 and
- 3) Housing Benefit is 1,000.

These are for claimants under the age of 60 years. Please note figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Population estimates are published on the Office for National Statistics website at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/index.html>

You may also be interested to be aware that the Department publishes a wide range of statistics on benefit claimants on its website via the Tabulation Tool at <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=tabtool> and on the Nomis website <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/Default.asp>, which is the Office for National Statistics' official website of labour market statistics, both of which allow you to construct your own tables.

For example, to produce statistics on how many people are in receipt of ESA by local authority, go to <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=tabtool>, scroll down and select **Benefit Caseloads National Statistics (WPLS) data** in the **Benefit Data** section then under **Benefit/Scheme**, select **Employment and Support Allowance** and make your table selection.

Reigate and Banstead Local Authority include the following wards, Horley Central, Horley East and Horley West.

Information at Ward and Lower Super Output Area are published at: <http://83.244.183.180/NESS/BEN/iben.htm>

Housing Benefit National Statistics at Great Britain (GB), Region and Local Authority level are published at: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=hbctb>

Information is not available at Ward and Lower Super Output Area. Housing Benefit statistics at January 2011 by Parliamentary Constituency level is published at:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/hb\\_ctb/hb\\_ctb\\_parlc\\_jan11.xls](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/hb_ctb/hb_ctb_parlc_jan11.xls)

In response to question 2, to qualify for Incapacity Benefit (IB), claimants have to undertake a medical assessment of incapacity for work called a Personal Capability Assessment. Under the ESA regime, new claimants have to undergo the Work Capability assessment. From April 2011 Incapacity Benefit recipients also began to undertake this assessment.

ESA Work Capability Assessment summary statistics are published at:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa\\_wca](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa_wca) .

In response to question 3, the information that you have requested for Upfield Road is being withheld as it falls under the exemption in section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. This exemption covers personal information about a third party.

In response to question 4, benefit expenditure tables by Local Authority/Parliamentary Constituency and Benefit are published at:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/index.php?page=expenditure> .

In response to question 5, the Fraud Investigation Service has a team of 4 Fraud Investigators in Redhill which covers the Horley area. Please note that these are DWP investigators and we are unable to comment on the number of Local Authority investigators in the Horley area.

In the current operational year which commences on 01 April 2011 and ends on 31 March 2012, 62 sanctions have been achieved to date. A sanction is defined as a Caution, Administrative Penalty or case recommended for Prosecution.

A criminal sanction is pursued in all cases where the standard of evidence meets the prosecutable standard and it is in the public interest to do so. Not all cases will be put before the Courts. Less serious frauds can be dealt with by cautions or administrative penalties where it is cost effective to do so. Re-offenders may however be prosecuted.

**Cautions** - Offenders must admit the offence and consent to be cautioned. If a caution is refused the Department may proceed to prosecution, and if subsequently prosecuted for another benefit offence the formal caution can be cited in court.

In Scotland cautions are known as administrative cautions and cannot be cited in court, but may be referred to in reports to the procurator fiscal for consideration of prosecution of any subsequent offence.

An **administrative penalty** is an additional financial penalty (currently 30% of the gross overpayment) over and above repayment of benefit. The customer does not have to admit the offence but if the administrative penalty is refused the Department may proceed to prosecution.

All other cases are referred to the Departmental solicitors for criminal **prosecution**.

The information provided in this Freedom of Information answer relating to sanctions is derived from operational processes and systems solely for the purposes of helping the department to manage its business. As it was never the Department's intention to put this information into the public domain, it has not been subjected to the rigorous quality assurance checks that our published official statistics are put through. However as DWP holds the information, we have released it. We recommend that caution be applied when using this information