

Freedom of Information request 571/2014

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Information request

FOI request 20th Jan 2013 Re Sanction statistics Oct 2012 to June 2013

A. With regards to your document published 6th Nov 2013 "JSA Sanction Decision Levels by Jobcentre Plus Regional Group and District 22nd October 2012 to 30th June 2013", please can you clarify the following

1. What is a 'non-adverse decision'? If this is a decision not to apply a sanction, would the claimant have been receiving JSA or ESA whilst the decision was being made?
2. What is an 'adverse decision'? Does this show the total number of people who have received sanctions, even if the sanction was removed on appeal? If not, what does it show?
3. What is a 'reserved decision'?
4. What is a 'cancelled decision'? Does this refer to cancellation after an appeal? On average how long does it take between a sanction being imposed and its being cancelled?

B. What is the total number of people in Great Britain who were under sanction for JSA or ESA during June or Part of June 2013

DWP response

In response to your question A:

1. A 'non-adverse' decision is when a case has been considered and a decision was made not to apply a sanction. The claimant is usually still in receipt of benefit when the decision is made, however on occasions they may have stopped claiming during the decision making process.
2. An 'adverse decision' is a decision found against the claimant, i.e. a sanction or disallowance is applied. It can be made at the original decision making point, at reconsideration, or on appeal. If an adverse decision is overturned following a reconsideration or appeal, it will appear as a 'non adverse decision' in the table to which you refer.

3. A 'reserved decision' normally applies when a sanction is appropriate, but can't be applied because the claimant does not have a current claim. These cases are re-referred to the Decision Maker if the claimant reclaims within a timescale set by the Decision Maker in their reserved decision, or equal to the maximum sanction period applicable for the case.
4. After a case has been referred to a Decision Maker the referral can be cancelled before a decision is made. A 'cancelled decision' does not refer to the cancellation of a sanction after an appeal has been made.

In response to your question B:

The information requested about the total number of people who were under a sanction for JSA or ESA during June or part of June 2013 is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.

The Department does hold some information on the duration of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) sanctions. This includes the date the sanction was applied but we do not hold readily available information on the actual length.

To provide an answer would require us to combine data on multiple sanctions and overlapping decisions accounting for differences in dates (e.g. when a claim ends during a sanction; when a sanction is reserved for application against a future JSA claim; when circumstances change during or after a sanction).

Although theoretically possible it is estimated that this would take in excess of 5 working days and would therefore incur disproportionate cost.

I can however provide you with the number of decisions made to apply a sanction during June 2013. This is shown in the sanctions publication of 6th November. There were 68,170 JSA decisions and 2,100 ESA decision to apply a sanction in June 2013, the link for reference is provided below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/255568/sanctions-nov2013-update-2.xls