

Jobseeker's Allowance claim duration and sanctions

Data for January 2010 to December 2015

Ad-hoc

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Great Britain

This release includes an assessment of benefit sanctions and the total length of time individuals have claimed Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) in the period from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2015. A sanction decision may result when a condition of a JSA benefit claim is not fulfilled and this release focuses on adverse decisions (i.e. decisions to apply a sanction) and does not include cases where an adverse decision has later been overturned after a reconsideration or appeal.

The likelihood of being sanctioned in any given month does not substantially change as total time on JSA increases

For individuals who have claimed JSA for less than a year over the six years to 31 December 2015, the average number of adverse sanction decisions for each month on JSA is 0.04, rising to 0.05 for those who claimed for between 2 and 4 years, before falling again for those claiming longer.

The likelihood of being sanctioned increases as total time on JSA increases

Within the six years to December 2015, 21% of individuals making a claim to JSA received an adverse sanction decision. However, 3 in every 4 claimed JSA for less than a year during that period. 13% per cent of these received an adverse sanction decision.

Chart 1: Average number of adverse sanction decisions per month by total time on JSA 2010-2015

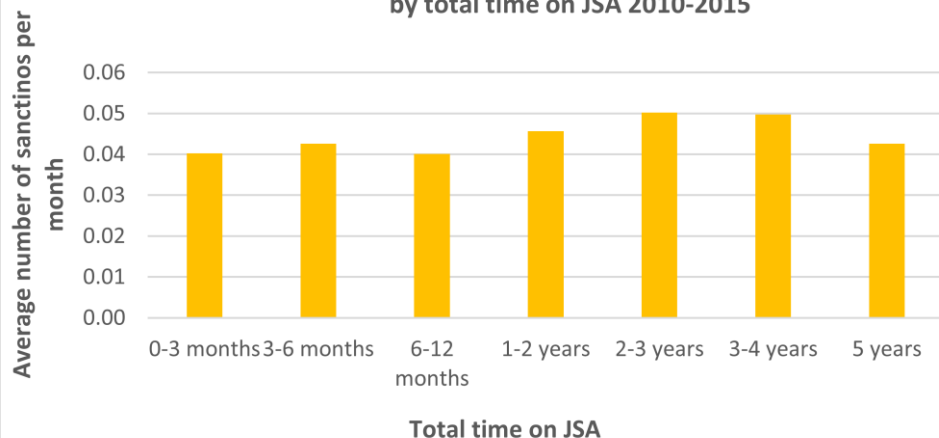


Table 1: Total time on JSA 2010-2015

	0-3 months	0-6 months	0-1 year	0-2 years	0-3 years	0-4 years	0-5 years
Cumulative % of individuals	36%	55%	75%	90%	96%	99%	100%
Cumulative % of these individuals sanctioned	6%	9%	13%	17%	19%	21%	21%

About these statistics

Methodology

Data on JSA claims is taken from the March 2016 National Benefits Database and includes all claims that were live at any point during the period from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2015. JSA adverse sanction decisions statistics are derived from a combination of data from the Decisions Making and Appeals System (DMAS) and the Labour Market System (LMS). Recording and clerical errors can occur within both DMAS and LMS.

The total time on JSA in the period for all individuals was calculated and categorised into seven duration bands. Only claims and related sanctions that fall completely into the period have been included. Table 1 shows the cumulative percentage of individuals with JSA claims within each of these duration bands and the cumulative percentage of these that were sanctioned.

For Chart 2, the average length of claim within each duration band was calculated and multiplied by the number of individuals to calculate the total number of months on JSA for individuals in that duration band. The JSA claim data was then matched to sanctions data to determine the number of adverse sanction decisions in each band, and the average number of sanctions per month worked out as follows:

$$\text{Average number of sanctions per month} = \frac{\text{Number of sanctions in each band}}{\text{Total number of months on JSA for claims in each band}}$$

Although more recent data on sanctions has been published (taking sanctions data to June 2016), the timeframe for this release has been chosen to reflect the timescales used by the National Audit Office (NAO) in its recent publication.

The NAO report stated that 24 per cent of JSA claimants had received a sanction in the period 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2015. NAO based its calculation on the original decision made and did not take account of decisions that were subsequently overturned at reconsideration or appeal. As these are no longer treated as adverse decisions in the Official Statistics on sanctions, an equivalent figure is given in this release to match the methodology in the Official Statistics. This shows that 21 per cent of JSA claimants in the same period received a sanction.

These statistics are being released to support discussion and figures used at the Public Accounts Committee hearing on 12 December 2016 into the NAO Report on benefit sanctions.

Where to find out more

Official statistics on JSA sanctions can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/jobseekers-allowance-sanctions>

The NAO report on benefit sanctions can be found here: <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/benefit-sanctions/>

Lead Statistician: Sharon Moore

sharon.moore5@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

DWP Press Office: 0203 267 5129

Comments? Feedback is welcome

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