



Department
for Work &
Pensions

JSA and ESA hardship applications and awards

Management information data for the period April
2012 to June 2015

November 2015

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Background

This publication provides an update to “The number of hardship awards in 2011/12”¹.

A hardship payment is a payment of Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance to someone who does not qualify for JSA under normal rules and would suffer hardship if JSA or ESA were not paid.

A JSA hardship payment can only be made if a person can show that they, or a specified member of their family, would suffer hardship if an award was not made and one of the following circumstances apply:

- the claimant is not entitled to JSA because they are not available for or actively seeking work;
- JSA is not paid because a sanction has been imposed on the claimant;
- the claimant is waiting for a decision about whether they satisfy certain labour market entitlement conditions at the start of their claim to JSA;
- the claimant’s JSA is suspended;
- a Fraud Loss of Benefit penalty has been imposed on the claimant;

JSA hardship is paid at 60% of the claimant's normal personal allowance award of Jobseeker's Allowance or 80% where a claimant or a family member is pregnant or seriously ill. 100% of any premiums the claimant receives are restored by a JSA hardship payment

A person or couple in hardship who are not in a vulnerable group are entitled to hardship payments from the later of

- the 15th day of the period for which payment has been stopped or
- the date the claimant becomes a person in hardship.

Hardship is payable to persons in a vulnerable² group from the first day their JSA payment is stopped.

An ESA hardship payment can only be made if a person can show that they, or a specified member of their family, would suffer hardship if an award was not made and one of the following circumstances apply:

- a sanction applies because the claimant is in the work related activity group and did not attend or take part in a work focussed interview,

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/222972/hardship_adhoc_2011_2012.pdf

² Vulnerable claimants include a number of groups, for example where the claimant or partner: is pregnant, or are responsible for a child under 16 or a qualifying young person, or have a chronic medical condition, or are caring for someone under certain conditions. For a full list, see chapter 35, paragraph 35055, of the Decision Makers

Guide: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/296130/dmgch35.pdf

- a sanction applies because the claimant is in the work related activity group and without good reason did not undertake a work-related activity they were required to complete
- a Fraud Loss of Benefit penalty has been imposed on the claimant;

ESA hardship is paid at 60% of the claimant's personal entitlement allowance. Any premiums and the work related activity component of their award are not affected by a sanction.

ESA hardship is payable from the first day the ESA payment is stopped.

From July 2014 a series of improvements have been made to the hardship operational process resulting in a streamlined process with dedicated hardship officers in place. These improvements have been supported through strengthened communications both for the work coach and claimant to ensure that the claimant is always notified about hardship at point of a sanctions referral and is provided with the information, advice and guidance on making a hardship claim both verbally and in writing.

Methodology

The table in the results section shows the total number of JSA and ESA hardship applications received and the number of awards made in the period from April 2012 to June 2015. These figures show applications and awards rather than the number of individuals; individuals may have made more than one application and received one than one award.

The numbers of JSA and ESA Hardship Awards are collated from aggregate DWP MISP Management Information. This data is a combination of system and clerically sourced Management Information. It is not considered 100% reliable and may contain duplicates. It does not form part of the official statistics outputs that are released by the Department in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice, and is subject to potential future revision. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 100, numbers greater than 0 and less than 50 are indicated by a ~.

It is not possible to break the data down by reason or provide geographical breakdowns for the data.

It is not possible to match the hardship data with the sanctions and disentitlements database, so it is not possible to tell whether a hardship award arose from a particular sanction or disentitlement or other reason. It is also not possible to tell whether a hardship payment from one month was as a result of a sanction or disentitlement or other reason from a previous month.

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Department for Work and Pensions

Results

Number of hardship applications and awards April 2012 to June 2015

Month	Jobseeker's Allowance		Employment and Support Allowance	
	Applications	Awards	Applications	Awards
April 2012	7,800	5,500	100	~
May 2012	9,500	6,300	100	100
June 2012	8,000	5,100	100	100
July 2012	9,800	6,200	100	100
August 2012	9,600	6,400	100	100
September 2012	6,800	4,800	100	~
October 2012	8,900	6,000	100	100
November 2012	15,000	11,000	200	100
December 2012	20,000	15,800	200	100
January 2013	22,500	18,300	300	200
February 2013	28,200	23,500	400	300
March 2013	24,700	20,400	300	300
April 2013	25,800	21,700	300	300
May 2013	31,600	26,900	500	400
June 2013	30,600	26,300	500	500
July 2013	36,400	31,600	800	700
August 2013	37,900	32,800	700	700
September 2013	37,400	32,300	800	700
October 2013	42,300	36,900	1,100	1,000
November 2013	35,400	31,200	1,000	900
December 2013	30,600	27,000	700	600
January 2014	30,000	26,200	700	700
February 2014	32,600	28,500	900	800
March 2014	32,700	28,600	1,000	900
April 2014	29,000	25,500	900	800
May 2014	25,800	22,700	800	700
June 2014	25,700	22,400	900	800
July 2014	27,800	24,300	1,000	900
August 2014	22,700	20,100	700	600
September 2014	22,800	20,300	800	700
October 2014	21,200	19,100	800	700
November 2014	18,800	17,000	600	600
December 2014	18,700	16,800	500	500
January 2015	15,200	13,600	500	400
February 2015	17,300	15,600	600	500
March 2015	17,500	15,700	600	600
April 2015	14,800	13,200	400	400
May 2015	13,800	12,200	400	400
June 2015	13,600	12,100	400	300