

Freedom of Information request 2013-5448

Date received: 19th November 2013

Date of response: 17th December 2013

Information request

Following the recent publication of data on benefit sanctions, I request disclosure of the following information about JSA and ESA sanctions. Everything in this request relates to the period 22/10/12 to 30/6/13 and to the Bradford Metropolitan District (BMD) area. I ask that all the information requested below be broken down for the four Jobcentre Plus offices covering that area:

- Bradford Eastbrook Court
- Bradford Westfield House
- Shipley
- Keighley

Jobseekers Allowance

1) How many of the following sanctions were applied to JSA claimants under the new fixed period regime:

- a) 4 weeks
- b) 13 weeks
- c) 26 weeks
- d) 156 weeks
- e) disallowance
- f) other sanction period

2) With reference to the total figures in 1) above, please give the number, for each type of fixed period sanction or disallowance, applied to the following claimant groups:

- a) Sex
- b) Disability
- c) Ethnicity
- d) Age: 18-25; 26-45; 46-64

2) e) Can you supply a similar breakdown for other protected characteristic groups within the Equality Act 2010?

2) f) If yes, please provide a breakdown of the data as requested above

2) g) If no, please explain why you cannot provide data about groups that are protected under the law?

3) With reference to the total figures in 1) above, please give the number of decisions that were overturned for the following reasons, for each type of fixed period sanction or disallowance:

- a) reconsideration by a DWP official
- b) hearing at an independent appeal tribunal

Employment Support Allowance

4) My understanding is that no figures have yet been published in relation to sanctions applied to ESA claimants in the 'work related activity group' below the level of West Yorkshire. How many sanctions were applied to ESA WRAG claimants in each the four BMD area JCP offices listed above?

5) With reference to the total figures in 4) above, please give the number of fixed sanctions or disallowance, applied to the following claimant groups:

- a) Sex
- b) Disability
- c) Ethnicity
- d) Age: 18-25; 26-45; 46-64

5) e) Can you supply a similar breakdown for other protected characteristic groups within the Equality Act 2010?

5) f) If yes, please provide a breakdown of the data as requested above

5) g) If no, please explain why you cannot provide data about groups that are protected under the law?

6) With reference to the total figures in 4) above, please give the number of decisions that were overturned for the following reasons, for each type of fixed period sanction or disallowance:

- a) reconsideration by a DWP official
- b) hearing at an independent appeal tribunal

DWP response

In response to the first part of your query relating to Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), the information requested for the number of claimants who have received a sanction referral resulting in an adverse decision by sanction level and a count of sanctions for a variety of demographic breakdowns and also whether any decisions have been appealed or reconsidered for Jobcentre Plus offices in Bradford Metropolitan District from 22nd October 2012 to 30th June 2013 is available in the tables below:

Number of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants with a sanction applied, in the Jobcentre Plus offices in Bradford Metropolitan District: 22nd October 2012 - 30th June 2013

	Type and number of sanctions								
	Low			Intermediate			High		
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd or more	1 st	2 nd	3 rd or more	1 st	2 nd	3 rd or more
Bradford Metropolitan District	2,360	450	240	1,610	360	100	420	30	20

Number of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) sanctions applied, in the Jobcentre Plus offices in Bradford Metropolitan District: 22nd October 2012 - 30th June 2013

		Type of sanction			
		Low	Intermediate	High	Level not applicable / not recorded
Bradford Metropolitan District Total		4,210	2,650	530	10
Age Group	18-25 years of age	2,140	990	250	-
	26-45 years of age	1,660	1,160	210	-
	46-64 years of age	410	500	70	-
	Other age	10	10	-	-
Ethnicity	White	2,300	1,070	290	-
	Asian or Asian British	1,030	840	130	-
	Black or Black British	80	40	-	-
	Mixed	90	40	-	-
	Other/ Chinese	210	310	40	-
	Unknown Ethnicity	500	350	70	-
Gender	Female	1,040	830	140	-
	Male	3,170	1,820	390	10
	Unknown Gender	-	-	-	-
Disability	Disability - Yes	620	460	50	-
	Disability - No	3,590	2,190	480	10
	Disability - Unknown	-	-	-	-
Lone Parent	Lone Parent - Yes	240	230	10	-
	Lone Parent - No	3,970	2,430	520	10

Appeal / Reconsideration	Appeal	80	90	20	-
	Reconsideration	470	310	150	-
	No Appeal or Reconsideration	3,660	2,250	360	10

Source: DWP Information Directorate: JSA Sanctions and Disallowance Decisions Statistics Database.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten. "-" denotes nil or negligible. Some additional disclosure control has been applied. Totals may not sum due to rounding method used.
2. If an individual is sanctioned within more than one level they will appear within each applicable level (applicable to Table 1 only).
3. The number of benefit sanctions applied is the number of sanction or disallowance referrals where the decision was found against the claimant.
4. New regulations introduced a new revised sanctions regime for JSA claimants from 22nd October 2012. Details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobseekers-allowance-overview-of-sanctions-rules>
5. **Jobcentre Plus Office:** For this piece of analysis we have classified Bradford Metropolitan District as the Jobcentre Plus offices requested i.e. Bradford Eastbrook Court, Bradford Westfield House, Shipley and Keighley.

There is more detail about the lengths of sanctions applied in the sanctions regime which can be found via the link below, this should help you in calculating the actual lengths of the sanctions applied:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobseekers-allowance-overview-of-sanctions-rules>

In response to the second part of your query relating to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), the information requested for the number of ESA sanctions applied for failing to participate in Work Related Activity, for a variety of demographic breakdowns and also whether any decisions have been appealed or reconsidered for Jobcentre Plus offices in the Bradford Metropolitan District from 27th October 2008 to 30th June 2013 is available in the table below:

Number of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) sanctions applied for failing to participate in Work Related Activity, in the Jobcentre Plus offices in Bradford Metropolitan District: 27th October 2008 - 30th June 2013

<p>Failure to participate in Work Related Activity</p>

Bradford Metropolitan District Total		160
Age Group	18-25 years of age	20
	26-45 years of age	90
	46-64 years of age	40
	Other age	-
Ethnicity	White	110
	Asian or Asian British	30
	Black or Black British	-
	Mixed	-
	Other/ Chinese	-
	Unknown Ethnicity	10
Gender	Female	70
	Male	90
	Unknown Gender	-
Disability	Disability - Yes	120
	Disability - No	30
	Disability - Unknown	-
Lone Parent	Lone Parent - Yes	-
	Lone Parent - No	160
Appeal / Reconsideration	Appeal	-
	Reconsideration	10
	No Appeal or Reconsideration	150

Source: DWP Information, Governance and Security Directorate: Sanctions and Disallowance Decisions Statistics Database.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten. "-" denotes nil or negligible. Some additional disclosure control has been applied. Totals may not sum due to rounding method used.
2. The number of benefit sanctions applied is the number of sanction referrals for failing to participate in Work Related Activity where an adverse decision has been applied.
3. The category for "Failure to participate in Work Related Activity" includes referrals for failing to participate in the Work Programme.
4. New regulations introduced a new revised sanctions regime for ESA claimants from 3rd December 2012. Details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobseekers-allowance-overview-of-sanctions-rules>

5. **Jobcentre Plus Office:** For this piece of analysis we have classified Bradford Metropolitan District as the Jobcentre Plus offices requested i.e. Bradford Eastbrook Court, Bradford Westfield House, Shipley and Keighley.

We can confirm that the Department does hold some information on other protected characteristic groups within the Equality Act 2010. However, we estimate that the cost of complying with this part of your request would exceed the appropriate limit of £600.

The appropriate limit has been specified in regulations and for central Government it is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act the Department is not obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing your request further.

You may find it useful to know that under the Public Sector Equality Duty, part of the Equality Act 2010, as a public body the Department has a specific duty to publish relevant proportionate information to demonstrate our compliance with the legislation. On 12th July 2013 the Department published the DWP Equality Information 2013 report under the Public Sector Equality Duty. We have based the information relating to people who are affected by our policies and practices on the existing Departmental Impact Indicators included in our Business Plan. They show key data which are designed to help the public judge whether our policies are having the effect they want. We have broken the impact indicator data down by as many protected characteristics covered by the Act as we currently have available, including ethnicity. The report is available on the Government website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-equality-information-2013>