

# **Freedom of Information requests**

## **2013-1723 & 2013-2754**

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## **Information requests**

### **Freedom of Information request 2013-1723**

We are after the number of adverse sanctions decisions in Newcastle in 2011 and 2012.

### **Freedom of Information request 2013-2754**

I now would like to request the following, for the years 2011 and 2012, for (1) Newcastle Upon Tyne and (2) nationally:

1. The average length of an adverse sanction period
2. How many were sanctioned -
  - two to four weeks
  - 5 to 15 weeks
  - 16 to 26 weeks
  - higher than 26?

This would give us a proportion of the numbers you have already given us

3. Do you know how many of those were appealed to the independent tribunal service?

4. And how many of those appeals were completely successful?

5. How much in total (in pounds) Jobseekers Allowance was removed from claimants due to adverse sanctions?

6. For the total numbers of adverse sanctions (that you previously gave in response to FOI 2013-1723), can you say how many were under 25 and how many were 25 or over.

## DWP responses

### Freedom of Information request 2013-1723

In response to your question, statistics on the number of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) sanction referrals by whether the decision was adverse in Newcastle upon Tyne Local Authority from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011 – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012 are available in the table below;

Please note that the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2012 is the latest date for which figures are currently available by Local Authority.

#### **Total number of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) Sanction referrals by whether the decision was adverse, Newcastle upon Tyne Local Authority: 1st January 2011 - 31st May 2012**

	All	No Decision	Non Adverse	Adverse
Jan-11	720	40	260	420
Feb-11	790	40	300	450
Mar-11	990	60	340	590
Apr-11	700	30	220	440
May-11	640	30	260	350
Jun-11	510	30	250	220
Jul-11	620	60	260	290
Aug-11	740	80	280	380
Sep-11	640	90	240	300
Oct-11	630	100	240	290
Nov-11	890	160	350	390
Dec-11	600	100	270	230
Jan-12	790	150	300	350
Feb-12	1000	270	390	340
Mar-12	990	230	380	380
Apr-12	910	230	350	330
May-12	1270	330	310	620

#### **Source:**

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

#### **Notes:**

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten; "-" denotes nil or negligible.  
Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. **Varied Length sanctions:** A sanction of between 1 week and 26 weeks is imposed for leaving employment voluntarily without just cause, refusing employment without good cause, or losing employment

through misconduct. The actual period in each case is at the discretion of the Adjudication Officer who makes the decision.

3. **Fixed Length sanctions:** A sanction of between 1 week and 26 weeks is imposed for refusal, without good cause, to attend an employment programme or carry out a Jobseeker's Direction. Payment of benefit continues in full pending the Adjudication Officer's decision on a sanction question.
4. **Entitlement Decisions:** These are questions on which entitlement to JSA depends. For example, if there is doubt around whether the Jobseeker's agreement (JSAg) is suitable, whether they are actively looking for work or making themselves available for work. In most cases payment of JSA will be suspended by benefit processing until the doubt is resolved.

### **Freedom of Information request 2013-2754**

In response to questions 1, 2 and 5;

We can confirm that the Department does hold some information on the duration of JSA sanctions (the term sanction has been used here to mean both sanctions and disallowances). 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). We would also need this information to calculate how much was 'removed' from claimants due to the application of a sanction.

We therefore 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 this part of your request and we will not be processing it further.

In response to questions 3, 4 and 6 the information requested can be found in the tables below.

**Number<sup>1</sup> of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) sanctioned claimants who appealed the original decision by appeal decision<sup>3</sup> and month<sup>4</sup> in Newcastle upon Tyne Local Authority<sup>5</sup>: 1st January 2011 - 31st May 2012**

Month	Appeal decision	
	Total	Non-adverse
Jan-11	-	-
Feb-11	-	-
Mar-11	10	-
Apr-11	-	-
May-11	10	10
Jun-11	20	10
Jul-11	10	10
Aug-11	10	-
Sep-11	30	10
Oct-11	-	-
Nov-11	10	-
Dec-11	10	-
Jan-12	10	-
Feb-12	10	-
Mar-12	10	10
Apr-12	10	-
May-12	10	-

**Number<sup>1</sup> of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) claimants with a sanction applied<sup>2</sup> by age<sup>6</sup> in Newcastle upon Tyne Local Authority<sup>5</sup>: 1st January 2011 - 31st May 2012**

Month	Age		
	Total	Under 25	25 and over
Jan-11	420	180	240
Feb-11	450	180	280
Mar-11	590	240	350
Apr-11	440	160	280
May-11	350	140	210
Jun-11	220	90	130
Jul-11	290	120	170
Aug-11	380	170	210
Sep-11	300	130	170
Oct-11	290	130	160
Nov-11	390	180	210
Dec-11	230	120	110
Jan-12	350	170	180
Feb-12	340	180	150
Mar-12	380	150	230
Apr-12	330	140	190
May-12	620	260	360

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

**Notes:**

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten. Total may not sum due to rounding. “-“ denotes nil or negligible.
2. The number of sanctions applied is the number of Varied<sup>7</sup>, Fixed Length<sup>8</sup> and Entitlement Decision<sup>9</sup> sanction referrals where the decision was found against the claimant.
3. The decision to apply a sanction can be overturned (Non-adverse decision) following reconsideration or appeal by the Sector Decision Maker.
4. **Month:** The month in which the decision on the sanction referral, reconsideration or appeal was made. The year 2012 only includes data up to and including the 31st of May, which this is the latest data available by Local Authority.
5. **Local Authority:** Local Authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant postcode directory.
6. **Age:** Age of claimant is calculated at the date the referral for a decision was made.
7. **Varied Length sanctions:** A sanction of between 1 week and 26 weeks is imposed for leaving employment voluntarily without just cause, refusing employment without good cause, or losing employment through misconduct. The actual period in each case is at the discretion of the Adjudication Officer who makes the decision.
8. **Fixed Length sanctions:** A sanction of between 1 week and 26 weeks is imposed for refusal, without good cause, to attend an employment programme or carry out a Jobseeker's Direction. Payment of benefit continues in full pending the Adjudication Officer's decision on a sanction question.
9. **Entitlement Decisions:** These are questions on which entitlement to JSA depends. For example, if there is doubt around whether the Jobseeker's agreement (JSAg) is suitable, whether they are actively looking for work or making themselves available for work. In most cases payment of JSA will be suspended by benefit processing until the doubt is resolved.

The same data at national level is published on the Departments Tabulation Tool which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/dwp-statistics-tabulation-tool> . Instructions on how to create this data at national level are shown below.

1. Access the DWP Tabulation Tool via the link above.
2. Under **Sanctions and disallowances** select **Before 22 October 2012 – JSA sanction and disallowances**.

3. Under the Benefit/Scheme drop down, select **Referrals where a decision has been made for varied length sanctions (by number of referrals)**.
4. In the Analysis option select **(Thousands)**.
5. In the Row option select **Time Series**.
6. In the Column option select **Reason for referral – where appealed**.
7. If you only wish to know the number of appeals, in the Subset option select **NONE**. Otherwise, if you wish to know the number of *successful* appeals, select **Whether a decision was Adverse**.
8. In the following Subset option select **Non Adverse**.
9. Finally, in the Date option select **October 2012** which is the latest available data at national level. Then click **Get Table** to retrieve your statistics.

You will need to repeat this process both for fixed length sanctions and entitlement decisions by changing the type of sanction in step 3 above. The total of these three tables will give you the overall sanctions figure for Great Britain.