

Freedom of Information request 2013-2710

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Information request

- 1) how many people are claiming JSA in Watford
- 2) how many have been sanctioned in the past 12 months
- 3) how many have been mandated to use Universal Jobmatch
- 4) how many have been asked to provide their personal email account passwords

DWP response

In response to your first question, Section 21 of the Act allows us to direct you to information which is already reasonably accessible to you.

The preferred source of statistics on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) is the Office for National Statistics (ONS) claimant count figure. The claimant count measures the number of people claiming JSA. This is sourced from administrative records of people being paid the benefit.

Statistics on the claimant count are published on the NOMIS website <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>, the ONS official website of labour market statistics, which allows you to construct your own tables.

For example, to produce a table of the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance in Watford Local Authority from the claimant count, go to <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>.

To produce a table of the number of people who claim JSA as at May 2013, go to www.nomisweb.co.uk. Select **Advanced Query** in the **Detailed Statistics** section, and then select **Claimant Count** and select the dataset **claimant count - age duration with proportions** and make your table selection as follows;

1. Select the relevant geography by clicking the **geography** tab and select **local authorities: district / unitary** and then **East, Watford** from the list.
2. Then select the date tab and enter the date you require. Please note that the latest available information for claimant count data is **May 2013**.

3. Finally, click the **review selections** tab, check to see if the correct variables are included.
4. Once you are happy with the table selection, click **download data**. This will output your table into an Excel file.

In response to your second question the table below shows the number of claimants with a Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) sanction applied in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

Number¹ of claimants with a Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) sanction applied² by Area: 1st June 2011 - 31st May 2012

Area	Total
Great Britain	481,640
Watford Local Authority ³	650

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

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten.
2. **Sanctions applied:** The number of sanctions applied is the number of Varied⁴, Fixed Length⁵ and Entitlement Decision⁶ referrals where the decision was found against the claimant.
3. **Local Authority:** On April 1st 2009 structural changes to the Local Authorities of England took effect. Changes are reflected from April 2009 in this table
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **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.

We can confirm that the Department does hold more recent information on the number of sanctions applied however this information is being withheld under sections 12 and 22 of the FOIA.

Due to a problem with the underlying data source we estimate that to retrieve and extract this information for the period 1st June 2012 to 21st October 2012 (the last date covered by the old sanctions regime) 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. However we do aim to publish this information once the appropriate analytical work has been done by our statisticians.

Statistics from the 22nd October 2012, covering the new sanctions regime, are intended for future publication therefore the information requested is exempt from disclosure under the terms of Section 22 (Information intended for future publication) of the FOIA. This exemption is qualified, and is therefore subject to a public interest test. The public interest test is where the Department considers whether the balance of the public interest falls in favour of withholding or disclosing the information requested.

Arguments in favour of disclosure: There are public interest arguments in favour of disclosure of this information at the present time. Disclosure would for example improve transparency in the operations of the Department.

Arguments against disclosure: There are public interest arguments against disclosure of this information at the present time. These arguments include that it is in the public interest to adhere to the existing publication process for official statistics, which includes time for the data to be collated and properly verified.

It is also in the public interest to ensure that the publication of official information is a properly planned and managed process, to ensure that the data are accurate once placed into the public domain. It is also in the public interest to ensure that the information is available to all members of the public at the same time, and premature publication could undermine the principle of making the information available to all at the same time through the official publication process.

On this occasion, the balance of the public interest test falls in favour of withholding this information. As explained above, these statistics will be published in due course. Information on this publication will be provided here:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/release-calendar/index.html?newquery=*&lday=30&lmonth=5&lyear=2013&uday=&u

[month=&uyear=&theme=&source-agency=Work+and+Pensions&pagetype=calendar-entry](#)

More information on the new sanctions regime can be found at:
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/adviser/updates/jsa-sanction-changes/>

In response to your third question;

The information requested is not held by the Department. However, we are looking into how we can collect data on the number of JSA claimants who have been mandated to create a profile and public CV in Universal Jobmatch.

In response to your fourth question;

Claimants will not be asked to provide DWP staff with their personal email account password. This is personal to the claimant and must not be shared.