

Freedom of Information request 2014-4924

Date received 11 November 2014

Date of response 9 December 2014

Information request

I am interested in information regarding the effect of benefit sanctions on children in Scotland.

In FOI Request 2014-3711, data was given for the number of households in London with dependent children where a claimant received an adverse sanction decision.

Please provide information on the number of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimant households with dependent children, where the claimant has received an adverse sanction decision (by level of sanction for JSA) for the latest 12 month period for which data is available.

If it is possible within the cost limit, please provide information on the number of children in the of households affected in whatever way is appropriate for your database – probably number of households affected with 1 dependent child, 2 dependent children, 3 dependent children, or 4 or more dependent children.

DWP response

Claimants should do everything they can to find to work if they are able in return for benefits, and more than 70 per cent say they are more likely to follow the rules if they know they risk having their benefits stopped if they don't. Benefit sanctions are only used as a last resort and the overwhelming majority of claimants do not receive a sanction. The recent independent Oakley review confirmed that they are vital to a properly functioning welfare system.

The most common reasons for a Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) sanction include failure to actively look for work, failure to take part in an employment programme and not having a good reason for missing a meeting at the Jobcentre. Claimants can always ask for us to look at the sanction decision again, and we have a well-established system of hardship payments where needed for vulnerable claimants.

The Government has introduced the Claimant Commitment for anyone making a new claim for JSA. The commitment will see jobseekers having to account more clearly for their efforts to find work in order to receive their benefits.

In response to your query the information you require is shown in the table below:

Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimant households with dependent children, where claimant has received an adverse sanction decision between 1 June 2012 and 31 May 2013, by sanction level and number of dependent children in the household: Scotland

Sanctions	Number of dependent children					Total with children
	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	4 Children	5 or more Children	
JSA Total	1,730	1,010	410	180	90	3,420
Low	560	320	110	50	30	1,080
Intermediate	400	260	100	50	20	830
High	130	60	30	10	-	230
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-
Level not applicable (old regime)	640	370	170	70	40	1,280
ESA Total	90	60	20	10	-	180

Source: DWP 100% WPLS data and HMRC Child Benefit administrative data.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten. "-" denotes nil or negligible. Totals may not sum due to the rounding method used.
2. Dependent children are those aged under 19. These figures are affected by the introduction of Child Tax Credit in April 2003.
3. Data is up to 31 May 2013 which is the latest available on dependent children.