

Freedom of Information request 2015-1472

Date received 8 April 2015

Date of response 7 May 2015

Information request

From each month from April 2012 to the most recent available, please give the number of Work Programme compliance doubts referred to JCP for ESA recipients aligned with the latest National Statistics available broken down by Contract Package Area (inc. provider). This includes the following data:

Total referrals (per month)

Number of decisions

Number of Favourable Decisions

Number of Adverse Decisions

Number of Reversed Decisions

Number of Cancelled Decisions

Outstanding Referrals

If you are able to also supply the above figures for those claimants with Mental and Behavioural Disorders against other conditions within the £600 limit, this is also requested.

In essence, this is a request for the same information as FOI request 2014-3464, but related to ESA (detailed by the Summary International Classifications of Diseases) rather than JSA recipients.

DWP response

The intention of sanctions is to encourage people to engage with the support being offered by Jobcentres by making it clearer to claimants what they are expected to do in return for their benefits. Sanctions are a necessary part of the benefits system and are used only as a last resort and the overwhelming majority of claimants do not receive a sanction.

In response to your query please see the attached document (FOI 2015-1472 Response.xls). This report covers the number of Work Programme compliance doubts referred to Jobcentre Plus for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants up to the end of September 2014. The information relates to the number of doubts raised rather than the number of individuals.

Please note that the data supplied are derived from unpublished management information which was collected for internal Departmental use only, and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. They should therefore be treated with caution.

With regard to your further request for this information to be split by International Classifications of Diseases, we can confirm that the Department does hold some information falling within the description specified in your request. However, we estimate that the cost of complying with 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 this part of your request further.

You may find it useful to know that the Department publishes Official Statistics on ESA sanction decisions and information on these statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/jobseekers-allowance-sanctions>

The latest set of Official Statistics was released on 18 February 2015 and a summary of this data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/jobseekers-allowance-and-employment-and-support-allowance-sanctions-decisions-made-to-september-2014>

These statistics cover both (i) total decisions made (i.e. if an individual has had multiple sanctions decisions made, all of those sanction decisions made will be included in the tables), and (ii) individuals who have had a sanction decision made (i.e. will only 'count' one individual in a table defined and produced). These statistics also contain a wide set of geographical areas, sanction reason, sanctions appeals and outcomes and if required this information can be extracted using Stat-Xplore via the following link:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required from Stat-Xplore can be found at:

https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Stat-Xplore_User_Guide.htm

If you have any difficulties extracting the relevant information please let us know.