

Freedom of Information request 2012-4219

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Information request

1) How many claimants of the following benefits

- a) Jobseekers allowance
- b) Employment Support Allowance
- c) Housing benefit

in the local authority areas of Liverpool, Sefton, Wirral, Knowsley received these benefits in 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13?

2) How many receivers of these benefits (with reference to the above local authority areas) had these benefits withdrawn in the above years? Please break down by individual benefit.

3) How many people (with reference to the above local authority areas) who were moved from Employment Support Allowance to Jobseekers Allowance successfully appealed this decision in the above years?

4) What was the combined bill for the above benefits in the above years (with reference to the above local authority areas)?

DWP response

In response to question 1); Section 21 of the Act allows us to direct you to information which is already reasonably accessible to you.

The preferred source of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) statistics is the Claimant Count. The Claimant Count measures the number of people claiming JSA and is measured from administrative records of people being paid the benefit. Claimant Count Statistics is published on the NOMIS website www.nomisweb.co.uk, the Office for National Statistics official website. NOMIS allows you to construct tables to your own requirements, including data against Local Authorities.

To access this data go to www.nomisweb.co.uk and select **Advanced query**. From the list presented select **Claimant Count** and then **Claimant Count with Rates and Proportions**, select **Geography**, then choose **Local Authorities: district / unitary**. From there you can select your Local

Authority by first selecting the corresponding region and then the Local Authorities you require. Make any further selections using the list on the left, once you are happy with your selections click **Download data** to view your table selection. The latest data is for **October 2012**.

Also, the Department regularly publishes National Statistics on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) on its website via the Tabulation Tool at <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=tabtool>. This allows you to construct tables to your own requirements.

For example, to produce statistics on the number of ESA claimants in the aforementioned local authorities, from the earliest to latest date available, go to <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=tabtool> scroll down and select “**Click here for Benefit Caseload National Statistics (WPLS) data**” in the **Benefit Caseloads** section, then under **Benefit/Scheme**, select **Employment and Support Allowance**. For the first drop down menu, next to **Analysis**, select **Caseload (Thousands)** and then under **Row**, select **Local Authority of claimant**. Then continue to make relevant table selections from there using the required dates in the **Date** option. Once you have selected all of the above select **Get Table**.

Lastly, the Department regularly publishes National and Summary Statistics on Housing Benefit on its website at <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=hbctb>. This contains statistics on Housing Benefit recipients via a series of Excel tables.

For example, to produce statistics on the number of Housing Benefit recipients in the aforementioned local authorities, from the earliest to latest date available, click “**Additional tables are available here**”, Table 2 may be of particular interest as it gives a time series from November 2008 of the number of Housing Benefit recipients by Region and Local Authority: by Tenure and Passported Status.

The Housing Benefit caseload for each local authority is also available from Stat-Xplore, a new statistics exploration and visualisation site launched on 14 November 2012.

http://83.244.183.193/hb_la/

In response to question 2 please see the tables below);

Number of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) sanctions applied by Local Authority and Year of Decision: 1st April 2009 to 30th April 2012

	Local Authority			
	Liverpool	Sefton	Wirral	Knowsley
2009/10	7,080	1,950	2,590	1,470

2010/11	11,040	3,570	5,940	2,990
2011/12	7,680	2,620	4,160	2,200
*2012/13	960	300	470	320

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

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten. "-" Denotes nil or negligible
2. The number of sanctions applied is the number of varied, fixed length and entitlement decision referrals where there has been an adverse decision.
3. Whilst claiming JSA, a customer can have a Labour Market 'doubt' raised against their claim. LM doubts are normally identified by staff at the Jobcentre Plus office and are referred to the Sector Decision Makers (SDMs). Once the SDM has made a decision on whether to sanction or disallow/allow a referral, they enter their decision on a system called DMAS (Decision Making and Appeals System). The decision is also sent back to the Jobcentre Plus office for entry to LMS (Labour Market System) and JSAPS (JSA Payment System) which then makes the appropriate changes to the actual payment to the customer.
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.
7. Local Authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant postcode directory.
8. * Figures for 2012/2013 include data to the 30th of April 2012 which is the latest data available.

Statistics on the number of conditionality sanctions imposed on ESA claimants in the aforementioned Local Authorities for the required time period is available in the following table;

Number of conditionality sanctions imposed on ESA claimants in the LA areas of Liverpool, Sefton, Wirral & Knowsley in 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12 & 2012/13*

	Local Authority			
	Liverpool	Sefton	Wirral	Knowsley
2009/10	60	50	20	10
2010/11	210	140	100	90
2011/12	210	90	60	70
*2012/13	30	20	10	10

Source: ESA payments system (JSAPS) data

Notes:

1. ESA claimants in the Work Related Activity Group are eligible for a conditionality sanction if they fail to attend or participate in mandatory work focused interviews (WFIs) without good cause. The sanction is applied to their work-related activity component.
2. * Data to May 2012 is the latest available published information.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten.
4. ESA started in October 2008 and the benefit caseload is increasing over time meaning that the WRAG client base eligible for sanctions is also increasing. In addition, in 2010 two changes were made to the conditionality & WFI regime for ESA claimants. See section 1.1.2 of http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa_sanc for further details.

Statistics on the number of Housing Benefit recipients who have had their benefits withdrawn is not readily available. Entitlement to or payment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit is not affected by benefit sanctions imposed for failure to comply with labour market conditions to which a claim for JSA or ESA may be subject.

The relevant legislation for applying a loss of benefit sanction against Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit is the [Social Security Fraud Act 2001](#) Sections 6 &7 and the supporting [Social Security Loss of Benefit Regulations 2001](#).

A loss of benefit sanction may be applied to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit following the commission of a benefit fraud offence which results in either a conviction an administration penalty or a caution for a benefit fraud offence against a disqualifying or sanctionable benefit. The sanction will be imposed where Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit are in payment or claimed during the relevant disqualification period. To provide a reply would require us to search through individual records in order to provide the information requested.

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 data. 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 further.

However, as previously mentioned, the Department regularly publishes National and Summary Statistics on Housing Benefit on its website at <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=hbctb>. One piece of published analysis which may be of particular interest to you is a time series which gives on flows and off flows from Housing Benefit from November 2008 to August 2012. This can be found at the following link;

http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/hb_ctb/hbctb_flows_nov12.xls

In response to question 3);

Statistics on the number of claimants making new claims for Employment and Support Allowance who have had a fit for work decision received following an initial Work Capability Assessment overturned by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service on appeal is available in the following table;

Number of claimants making new claims for Employment and Support Allowance who have had a fit for work decision received following an initial Work Capability Assessment overturned by Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service on appeal: 2008*, 2009, 2010 & 2011*

	Local Authority			
	Liverpool	Sefton	Wirral	Knowsley
*2008	50	20	50	20
2009	380	170	310	150
2010	410	140	220	100
*2011	250	80	90	60

Source: ESA Work Capability Assessment outcome data, October 2012.

Notes:

1. Figures in the table 1 do not include appeal outcomes for repeat Work Capability Assessments or Incapacity Benefit Reassessments;
2. Numbers in table 1 are rounded to the nearest 10;
3. * 2008 only includes data from October to December. 2011 only includes data from January to August;

4. Those awaiting the outcome of their appeal are not included in these statistics.

In response to question 4); Section 21 of the Act allows us to direct you to information which is already reasonably accessible to you.

Expenditure on benefits at Local Authority Level up to 2011/12 is readily available and published at

http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/la_expenditure.xls.

Figures for 2012/13 are not yet available, but will be published in September 2013.