

Freedom of Information request 2013-5197

Date received: 2nd November 2013

Date of response: 29th November 2013

Information request

Can you please tell me how many people have been sanctioned by the DWP in Blaenau Gwent over the last 3 years?

Can you give me a full breakdown on sanctions for each individual job centre?

How many people have been sanctioned? How long did the sanctions last?

DWP response

With regard to your query on the number of individuals on that were sanctioned in Blaenau Gwent Local Authority, the available information requested is shown in the tables below. This covers the time periods 1st January 2010 to 30th June 2013 for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Income Support Lone Parents (ISLP) and 1st January 2010 to 31st May 2012 and 22nd October 2012 to 30th June 2013 for Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), which is the latest information available.

Please note that due to a data issue, information on JSA sanctions for the period 1st June 2012 to 21st October 2012 is not readily available at Local Authority level. The JSA sanction figures for this year have therefore been provided separately for the two time periods which are available.

Number of individuals with a benefit sanction where an adverse decision has been made in Blaenau Gwent Local Authority: January 2010 – June 2013

Year of decision	Benefit		
	Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)	Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)	Income Support for Lone Parents (ISLP)
2010	660	80	150
2011	870	20	130
2012 – full year	n/a	40	130
2012 – 1 st Jan to 31 st May	470	n/a	n/a
2012 – 22 nd Oct to 31 st Dec	280	n/a	n/a
2013 ³ – 1 st Jan to 30 Jun	690	20	30

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

Source (ISLP): DWP Income Support Computer System.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten and totals may not sum due to the rounding method used. Totals will count individuals who have had a sanction applied for more than one benefit and/or more than one time period e.g. if an individual had a JSA sanction applied in 2010 and an ESA sanction applied in 2013 then they will appear twice.
2. The number of benefit sanctions applied is the number of sanction or disallowance referrals where the decision was found against the claimant.
3. Figures show the year in which the decision to apply a sanction was made. JSA figures for 2012 do not include sanctions applied between 1st June and 21st October, inclusive, which are not readily available by Local Authority. Figures for 2013 include sanctions applied up to and including 30th June which is the latest data available.
4. New regulations introduced a new revised sanctions regime for JSA and ESA claimants from 22nd October and 3rd December 2012 respectively. Details can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobseekers-allowance-overview-of-sanctions-rules>

In response to your query for a full breakdown of sanctions by Jobcentre Plus office, Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act allows us to direct you to information which is already reasonably accessible to you.

The Department published ad hoc statistics on sanctions and disallowances by Jobcentre Plus group, district and office titled: Number of Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions and disallowances, where a decision has been made, in

each month from 1 April 2000 to 21 October 2012, which can be used in answer to your question and can be found via the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/number-of-jobseekers-allowance-sanctions-and-disallowances-where-a-decision-has-been-made-in-each-month-from-1-april-2000-to-21-october-2012>

In response to your query on the duration of benefit sanctions, the information available within cost is available for ISLP sanctions and this can be found in the table below:

Average duration of ISLP sanctions where an adverse decision has been made in Blaenau Gwent Local Authority: January 2010 – June 2013

Year of decision	Average Duration (days)
2010	135
2011	223
2012	267
2013	94

Source: DWP Income Support Computer System.

Notes:

1. Averages are rounded to the nearest day. The average calculations include on-going sanctions. Where this is the case the end date has been set to the latest data available (30th June 2013). The result of this is that the data present is likely to be an underestimate of the actual average duration of sanctions.
2. Income Support Lone Parents receive a fixed sanction of 20% of the personal allowance rate of a single claimant [not aged less than 25] for each failure to attend/participate in a Work Focused Interview until 10 pence is left in payment. This sanction lasts until the individual attends and participates in a Work Focused Interview. In the case where there is more than one sanction in place the claimant need only attend/participate in one Work Focused Interview in order for all related sanctions to be removed from their benefit.

With regards to a) JSA sanction information for the period 1st June 2012 to 21st October and b) the duration of sanctions for JSA and ESA, I can confirm that the Department does hold some information falling within the description specified in your request. However, it is not readily available on the datasets available for analysis and 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 these parts of your request further.