

# Freedom of Information request 2014-52

Date received: 6<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Date of response: 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2014

## Information request

In Bolton and Bury local authorities and Jobcentre Plus offices, in 2012 and 2013:

- How many times did you stop or dock people's jobseeker's allowance in Bolton?
- How many people asked the department to reconsider the decision?
- How many of these requests were successful?

## DWP response

Please note that due to a data issue, information on JSA sanctions for the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012 to 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

Therefore in response your query as a whole, 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 that part of your request further.

In response to the rest of your query, the available information requested is shown in the tables below.

**Table 1: Number of JSA sanction referrals by decision, Bolton and Bury Local Authorities: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

Local Authority	Decision	Period		
		1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 12 to 31 <sup>st</sup> May 12	22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct 12 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec12	1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 13 to 30 <sup>th</sup> Jun 13
Bolton	Total	5,350	2,350	6,450
	Adverse	2,810	1,110	2,930
	Non adverse	1,370	570	1,810
	Reserved/Cancelled	1,170	670	1,710
Bury	Total	2,280	1,520	4,030
	Adverse	1,110	710	1,650

	Non adverse	630	410	1,130
	Reserved/Cancelled	530	400	1,250

**Table 2: Number of JSA sanction referrals with a reconsideration or appeal, and the result of that reconsideration or appeal, Bolton and Bury Local Authorities: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

Local Authority	Action	Decision	Period		
			1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 12 to 31 <sup>st</sup> May 12	22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct 12 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec12	1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 13 to 30 <sup>th</sup> Jun 13
Bolton	Appeals	Total	160	20	130
		Adverse	150	20	80
		Non adverse	10	10	50
		Reserved/Cancelled	-	-	-
	Reconsiderations	Total	420	260	800
		Adverse	230	130	390
		Non adverse	190	140	410
		Reserved/Cancelled	-	-	-
Bury	Appeals	Total	90	20	70
		Adverse	80	10	50
		Non adverse	10	-	20
		Reserved/Cancelled	-	-	-
	Reconsiderations	Total	210	230	550
		Adverse	100	120	260
		Non adverse	100	100	280
		Reserved/Cancelled	-	-	-

**Table 3: Number of JSA sanction referrals by decision, Bolton and Bury Jobcentre Plus Offices: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

Jobcentre Plus Office	Decision	Period		
		1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 12 to 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct 12	22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct 12 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec12	1 <sup>st</sup> Jan13 to 30 <sup>th</sup> Jun 13
Bolton	Total	8,330	1,820	5,050
	Adverse	4,340	880	2,350
	Non adverse	2,070	420	1,370
	Reserved/Cancelled	1,920	520	1,340
Bury	Total	3,070	940	2,450
	Adverse	1,470	450	1,060
	Non adverse	890	270	650
	Reserved/Cancelled	710	230	750

**Table 4: Number of JSA sanction referrals with a reconsideration or appeal, and the result of that reconsideration or appeal, Bolton and Bury Jobcentre Plus Offices: 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

Office	Action	Decision	Period		
			1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 12 to 21 <sup>st</sup> Oct 12	22 <sup>nd</sup> Oct 12 to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 12	1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 13 to 30 <sup>th</sup> Jun 13
Bolton	Appeals	Total	250	20	80
		Adverse	210	10	60
		Non adverse	40	-	20
		Reserved/Cancelled	-	-	-
	Reconsiderations	Total	650	200	600
		Adverse	330	100	290
		Non adverse	320	110	320
		Reserved/Cancelled	-	-	-
Bury	Appeals	Total	60	10	30
		Adverse	50	-	20
		Non adverse	20	-	10
		Reserved/Cancelled	-	-	-
	Reconsiderations	Total	270	150	360
		Adverse	120	80	180
		Non adverse	140	70	180
		Reserved/Cancelled	-	-	-

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

**Notes:**

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten and totals may not sum due to the rounding method used. “-“denotes nil or negligible.
2. Figures show the period in which the decision to apply a sanction was made. Figures for 2013 include sanction decisions made up to and including 30<sup>th</sup> June which is the latest data available.
3. **Sanctions applied:** The number of benefit sanctions applied is the number of sanction or disallowance referrals where the decision was adverse i.e. found against the claimant.
4. **Sanctions overturned:** The number of sanction referrals where the decision has been either appealed or reconsidered and the decision was non-adverse i.e. found in favour of the claimant.
5. For the period to 21<sup>st</sup> October 2012 the number of sanctions applied is the number of Varied, Fixed length and Entitlement Decision referrals where there has been an adverse decision.
6. **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.

7. **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.
8. **Entitlement decision:** 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.
9. New regulations introduced a new revised sanctions regime for JSA claimants from 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012. Details can be found here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobseekers-allowance-overview-of-sanctions-rules>
10. JSA sanction decisions made between 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012 and 21<sup>st</sup> October 2012 inclusive are not readily available by Local Authority.
11. Local Authority figures are for those claimants that live in Bury/Bolton Local Authority whereas the Job Centre figures are for claimants who sign on in that Job Centre but do not necessarily live in the Bury/Bolton Local Authorities.