Freedom of Information request 2013-1234

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Information request

"The number of people living in the London Borough of Havering who have had Jobseekers' Allowance removed as punishment in each of the last five financial years, broken down by year and by specific reason for removing benefits (e.g. refusal to take up work without good reason).

Note: If your records do not show which local authority claimants live in, please provide figures for people living in the following post codes: RM1 to RM5, RM7, RM11 to RM14."

DWP response

In response to your question on removal of JSA as a punishment, please note that sanctions are only applied when a Jobseeker has failed to meet the conditions attached to receiving Jobseeker's Allowance as stated in the Jobseeker's agreement.

Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) is a benefit for those who are unemployed and capable of, available for and looking for work. There are mandatory conditions attached to being able to receive JSA because there is evidence that compliance with these requirements - for example active job search and engagement with advisers - increases the chances that claimants find work more quickly than they would otherwise.

Sanctions play a vital role in encouraging claimants to comply with requirements that are designed to help them move into or prepare for work. The application of sanctions drives job seekers' behavior, including job seekers who would otherwise avoid participating in or taking up the support on offer to them.

The JSA sanctions process incorporates a number of safeguards to ensure a fair and transparent regime. Each sanction is considered on a case by case basis and claimants are given five working days to provide their reasons for failing to participate or engage with conditionality requirements.

The following table shows the number of individuals in Havering Local Authority who have had a Jobseeker's Allowance sanction applied, by the

reason for the sanction in each of the last five financial years. Please read the notes at the foot of the table.

Number of individuals¹ with Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) sanctions applied² in Havering Local Authority by the reason for applying a sanction and year of decision³: 1st April 2007 – 31st May 2012

Reason for referral	2007/	2008/	2009/	2010/	2011/	2012/
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Discharge from HM forces	-	-	-	-	-	-
Leaving employment voluntarily	190	150	150	180	110	30
Lost employment through						
misconduct	40	30	30	30	20	-
Neglect to avail of an opportunity of						
employment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Refusal of employment	10	10	-	180	70	20
Giving up place on training						
scheme/employment program	10	10	-	10	-	-
Losing place on training						
scheme/employment prog due to						
misconduct	20	10	10	20	-	-
Refusal of place on training						
scheme/employment program	-	-	-	-	-	-
Neglect to avail of place on training						
scheme/employment program	-	-	-	-	-	-
Failure to attend place on training						
scheme/employment program	50	30	30	60	20	-
Failure to attend Advisory Interview						
(post April 2010)	-	-	-	870	630	180
Refusal to carry out a Jobseeker's						
direction	-	-	-	20	30	20
Failure to attend Back to Work						
Session	-	-	-	250	10	-
Actively Seeking Employment	150	70	200	570	300	90
Availability questions	40	50	100	90	20	-
Failure to attend Advisory						
interview/FTP signed declaration	460	480	910	20	-	-
Jobseeker's Agreement questions	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trade disputes	-	-	-	-	-	-
Joint Claim exemption	-	-	-	-	-	-
Failed to Participate in Work						
Programme	-	-	-	-	70	40
Failed to Participate in Skills						
Conditionality	-	-	-	-	10	10

Failed to Participate in a Sector-						
Based Work Academy	ı	-	-	•	-	•
Failed to Participate in New						
Enterprise Allowance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Failed to Participate in Community						
Action Programme	ı	-	-	•	-	•
Failed to Participate in Work						
Experience	ı	-	-	•	-	•
Failed to Participate in Mandatory						
Work Activity	-	-	-	•	20	10

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

Notes:

- 1. "-" denotes Nil or Negligible. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten. Please note that individuals may appear more than once within the same time period in this table, for instance if a claimant has received one sanction for 'Refusal of employment' and two sanctions for 'Availability questions' within the same time period then they would appear twice in this table in that time period, once in each of those categories.
- 2. **Sanctions applied:** The number of sanctions applied is the number of Varied⁴, Fixed Length⁵ and Entitlement Decision⁶ referrals where the decision was found against the claimant.
- 3. **Year of Decision:** The year in which the decision to apply a sanction was made. The figures for 2012/2013 are from 1st April 2012 to 31st May 2012 which is the latest available data at this geographical level.
- 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.