

Freedom of Information request 2013-4312

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Information request

I request disclosure of the following information relating to the Jobcentre Plus offices covering the Leeds Metropolitan and Leeds City area. Could you provide a list of jobcentres covered in this area. And you could you answer the following:

1) For each period of 3 months, for the Leeds area, beginning in October 2009 and ending in September 2013, how many of the following were applied to JSA claimants:

- a) Varied length sanctions
- b) Fixed length sanctions
- c) Disallowances

2) With reference to the total figures in 1) above, please indicate the number of sanctions/disallowances applied to the following claimant groups per quarterly period as in 1) above:

- a) Sex
- b) Disability
- c) Ethnicity

3) With reference to the total figures in 1) above, please give the number of decisions (per quarterly period in 1) above) that were overturned for the following reasons. As these reasons should be recorded by the DWP and ITS, I presume they will be readily available:

- a) Reconsideration by a DWP official
- b) Hearing at an independent appeal tribunal

4) Since the introduction over 6 months ago, in late 2012, of a power to sanction sick and disabled people who receive ESA and who are in the 'work related activity group':

- a) How many ESA WRAG claimants in the BMD have been subject to a sanction?

DWP response

In response to questions 1 to 3 the requested information for Jobcentre Plus offices in the Leeds area from October 2009 to 21st October 2012 (the last date covered by the old sanctions regime) can be found in the attached document (FOI 2013-4312 Response.xls).

Jobcentre Plus offices covering the Leeds area are Leeds Dysons Chambers*, Leeds Eastgate, Leeds Eastgate*, Leeds LA*, Leeds Park Place, Leeds South, Leeds Southern House, Pudsey, Guiseley, Seacroft*, South Leeds*, Stanningley Leeds*

** denotes offices that are now dormant.*

In response to question 3, after the 21st of October 2012, and question 4, the statistics you have requested cover the new sanctions regime introduced from 22nd October 2012. These statistics are intended for future publication therefore this information is exempt from disclosure under the terms of Section 22 (Information intended for future publication) of the FOIA. This exemption is qualified, and is therefore subject to a public interest test. The public interest test is where the Department considers whether the balance of the public interest falls in favour of withholding or disclosing the information requested.

Arguments in favour of disclosure: There are public interest arguments in favour of disclosure of this information at the present time. Disclosure would for example improve transparency in the operations of the Department.

Arguments against disclosure: There are public interest arguments against disclosure of this information at the present time. These arguments include that it is in the public interest to adhere to the existing publication process for official statistics, which includes time for the data to be collated and properly verified.

It is also in the public interest to ensure that the publication of official information is a properly planned and managed process, to ensure that the data are accurate once placed into the public domain. It is also in the public interest to ensure that the information is available to all members of the public at the same time, and premature publication could undermine the principle of making the information available to all at the same time through the official publication process.

On this occasion, the balance of the public interest test falls in favour of withholding this information. As we have explained above, statistics on this issue will be published in due course.

A proposed publication date will be announced in advance via <https://www.gov.uk/> and <http://www.statsusernet.org.uk/Home/> in the "Welfare and Benefits" community.

More information about the new sanctions regimes can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/jobseekers-allowance-sanctions>