

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Our Ref: 2015-3101

20 August 2015

Dear Ian Wolf,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 23 July 2015.
You asked:

“What is a claimant's probability of being sanctioned at any point during a JSA claim, during past 5 years, broken down on a yearly basis or if not too costly to answer on a month by month basis?”

To put the format of this response into context, we should explain a little about the Freedom of Information Act. The Act concerns the provision of recorded information held by public authorities such as DWP; the Act does not require that we create new information or generate answers to questions. Therefore, if a request is made in the form of a question, we provide the recorded information already held that answers the question.

However, in the interests of customer service, if we don't hold recorded information that directly answers a question, we do our utmost to provide the recorded information we believe to be most closely related to the subject under question.

In this case we can confirm that the Department does not hold the information as requested.

We can supply some relevant information with regards to the number of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) sanction decisions and the number of people claiming JSA and this is given below.

Please note that the intention of sanctions is to encourage people to engage with the support being offered by Jobcentres by making it clearer to claimants what they are expected to do in return for their benefits. Sanctions are a necessary part of the benefits system. The overwhelming majority of benefit claimants take up the jobs support we offer, with a small minority facing a sanction for not doing so.

The Department publishes Official Statistics on JSA sanction decisions and information on these statistics can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/jobseekers-allowance-sanctions>

The latest set of Official Statistics was released on 12 August 2015, and includes decisions made to March 2015 and a summary of this data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/jobseekers-allowance-and-employment-and-support-allowance-sanctions-decisions-made-to-march-2015>

These statistics cover both (i) total decisions made (i.e. if an individual has had multiple sanctions decisions made, all of those sanction decisions made will be included in the tables), and (ii) individuals who have had a sanction decision made (i.e. will only 'count' one individual in a table defined and produced). These statistics also contain a wide set of geographical areas, sanction reason, sanctions appeals and outcomes and if required this information can be extracted using Stat-Xplore via the following link:

<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required from Stat-Xplore can be found at:

<https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Getting-Started---SuperWEB2.html>

If you have any difficulties extracting the relevant information please let us know.

Statistics on the number of JSA claimants are published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) under 'Claimant Count', and can be accessed via their NOMIS website at:

<http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Please note that the responsibility for these statistics lies with the ONS and Information on how to submit a freedom of information request to ONS can be found here:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/what-we-do/FOI/how-to-make-a-foi-request/index.html>

If you have any queries about this letter please contact us quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central FoI Team

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central FoI Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information

Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House,
Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF <https://ico.org.uk/>