

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: 2014-5262

24 March 2015

Dear Paul Anders,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 4 December 2014. Please accept our apologies for the delay in responding.

You asked:

“For each month from October 2008 to June 2014 inclusive, please give the number of adverse ESA (Work Related Activity Group) adverse sanction decisions broken down by:

ESA (WRAG) all: total number of claimants and number with adverse sanction decisions; ESA (WRAG) primary medical condition of drug abuse: total number of claimants and number with adverse sanction decisions; ESA (WRAG) primary medical condition of alcoholism: total number of claimants and number with adverse sanction decisions.

If possible, please also provide the reason for an adverse decision - i.e. failure to attend a mandatory interview or failure to participate in Work Related Activity.”

Please note that intention of the sanctions system 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 which are used only as a last resort and the overwhelming majority of claimants do not receive a sanction.

Please also note that the caseload figures supplied do not represent all incapacity related benefits and statistics on the total number of benefit claimants with a main disabling condition of drug misuse or alcohol misuse can be found here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/315256/benefit-claimants-drug-alcohol-condition.pdf

These figures show that the percentage of all incapacity type benefits claimants with a primary disabling condition of alcohol misuse is stable at around 2%.

In response to your request, please see the information provided in the attached spread sheet (FOI 2014-5262 Response.xls). As figures are now available up to September 2014 we have included the latest information.

Please note that the figures supplied are derived from unpublished information and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. They should therefore be treated with caution.

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 www.ico.gov.uk