

17 March 2016

Dear Bill Topping,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information requests received on 18 February 2016.
You asked:

2016-641

"I am writing to ask about 3-year sanctions.

On 4th Feb 2015 the then Minister for Employment told the Work and Pensions Select Committee that 0.00057% of referrals led to a 3-year sanction.

Subsequent to the hearing the number was corrected to 0.0057%. This amounted to 1,767 individual sanction decisions. This data is from the introduction of the new regime until June 2014.

Could you update this information so that the number of 3-year sanctions given reflects the latest data available?

If possible could you break this data down by a suitable time period – monthly, quarterly or annually, whichever is appropriate to how your data is stored?

Reference to 4th Feb

http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/work-and-pensions-committee/benefit-sanctions-policy-beyond-the-oakley-review/oral/17970.html#_ftn1"

2016-642

"I am writing to ask about 3-year sanctions in Wales.

On 4th Feb 2015 the then Minister for Employment told the Work and Pensions Select Committee that 0.00057% of referrals led to a 3-year sanction.

Subsequent to the hearing the number was corrected to 0.0057%. This represents 1,767 individual sanction decisions. This data is from

the introduction of the new regime until June 2014.

How many of these 3-year sanctions occurred in Wales?

Could you update this information so that the number of 3-year sanctions given reflects the latest data available?

If possible could you break this data down by a suitable time period – monthly, quarterly or annually, whichever is appropriate to how your data is stored?

Reference to 4th Feb

http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/work-and-pensions-committee/benefit-sanctions-policy-beyond-the-oakley-review/oral/17970.html#_ftn1”

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 following gives details of the current sanctions regime:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/238839/jsa-overview-of-revised-sanctions-regime.pdf

In response to your requests, Section 21 of the Freedom of Information Act allows us to direct you to information which is already reasonably accessible to you.

Statistics on Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) sanction decisions by can be found here:

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

The statistics used in February 2015 were taken from the published statistics available at the time here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/jobseekers-allowance-and-employment-and-support-allowance-sanctions-decisions-made-to-june-2014>

The estimate of the number of three year sanctions applied was taken from Table 1.7.

The latest set of Official Statistics was released on 17 February 2016 and covers sanction decisions made to September 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-september-2015>

The equivalent information from Table 1.7 can be used to provide an updated figure. Also the equivalent data can be obtained for Wales from the same tables in both published sources.

Further JSA sanction decision statistics, for example by month and region, can be extracted directly from Stat-Xplore here: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract information 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.

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/>