

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: FOI 953

DATE 11/04/16

Dear Zoe Kendal,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 10/03/2016 in which you ask:

The Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith claimed people liked being sanctioned - and that it helped them "focus", and also claimed people thanked him for taking their benefits away.

Source:-<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/iain-duncan-smith-claims-people-7533615>

Could you please give me the exact number of claimants who have thanked him for a sanction. Could you please give details of how many thank yous were sent by card or letter, and how many were verbal thank you's.

Response:

Please note that the intention of the sanctions regime is to encourage people to engage with the support being offered to them by Jobcentres by making it clearer what is expected of them in return for their benefits. A decision to apply a sanction is not taken lightly and claimants are given the opportunity to provide good reason for not complying before the decision is made.

We have evidence which shows that sanctions do have a positive impact on behaviour – over 70% of Jobseeker's Allowance claimants say that sanctions make it more likely they will follow the rules – including looking for work.

For more information see: Jobcentre Plus Offer: Final Evaluation Report:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/261656/rrep852.pdf

In response to your question about how many people have thanked the former Secretary of State for a sanction, the Department holds no information.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol 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@dwpgsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, 4th Floor, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London 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