

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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

Our Ref: 2015-IR195

11 June 2015

Dear Anna Smith,

Freedom of Information ref: 2015-IR195

Thank you for your request for an internal review of your Freedom of Information request 2015-853.

You asked:

"I am writing to request an internal review of my FOI request 'Monthly figures for JSA claimants by Jobcentre Plus office'.

The data in this FOI release suggests that Mansfield Station Road Jobcentre seems to have an exceptionally high sanctions rate. I believe the most likely explanation is a mistake in the data, but would like to confirm whether this is the case.

At Mansfield Station Road, the sanctions rate (calculated as [total number of sanctions] / [total number of claimants]) is 23% over the two years. The average rate at all Jobcentres is 5.5%. This would make the rate at Mansfield Station Road twice that of any other Jobcentre.

I have derived the number of claimants from DWP official data: Table 1.3 of the data at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/jobseekers-allowance-and-employment-and-support-allowance-sanctions-decisions-made-to-september-2014>

And I have derived the number of benefits sanctions from the data released in my FOI request.

Please could you review the data, and confirm whether the data for Mansfield Station Road in both this FOI release, and in the DWP data above, is correct?"

In your original request you asked:

"However, this response is still using a different set of Jobcentre IDs from those used in the sanctions data [1].

Compare, for example, the offices named for Birmingham in the sanctions data and in your response - they are very different. This makes it hard to do any meaningful analysis of the data.

Would it be possible to re-issue this response using the same office names as in the sanctions data?

[1] Table 1.3 in <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/jobseekers-allowance-and-employment-and-support-allowance-sanctions-decisions-made-to-june-2014>”

I am of a senior grade to the person who dealt with your request previously, and can confirm that I have carried out an internal review. I confirm that I have considered your request afresh. In conducting my review, I have discussed the original reply, the handling and the decisions on what can be provided with the officer who drafted it.

We can confirm that the figures we supplied for Mansfield Station Road Jobcentre in Shirebrook are correct.

Shirebrook has a very active and buoyant job market, offering a variety of vacancies including; warehouse, catering, cleaning, administration and driving. These job vacancies are easily commutable for the residents of Shirebrook and offer a variety of shift patterns. The buoyancy of the local labour market is reflected in the Jobseeker's Allowance register at Shirebrook greatly decreasing.

Work Coaches are there to support jobseekers into employment. This involves completing quality interventions with our jobseekers to ensure their Claimant Commitments are robust and they continue to satisfy the conditions to receive benefit. The main reason for the high proportion of sanctions recorded in Shirebrook is the high number of locally advertised, suitable job vacancies which are not applied for.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact us 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@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol 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