

Uses and Users of the DWP Fraud and Error in the Benefits System Statistics

Introduction

The DWP Fraud and Error in the Benefits System statistics provide estimates of fraud and error for benefits administered by the DWP and Local Authorities.

The Fraud and Error in the Benefits System report is published twice a year (May/June and November/December). The estimates published in May/June also feed into the DWP Resource Accounts.

Alongside the report, there are a number of tables published which provide the user with detailed estimates, giving a breakdown of overpayments into the different types of fraud and error.

Known Uses of DWP Fraud and Error in the Benefits System Statistics

The Statistics (and underlying datasets) are used by DWP for:

- Jobcentre Plus and the Pension, Disability and Carers Service business plans
- Assurance on the impact of anti-Fraud and Error activity across the businesses.
- A consistent time series for assessing fraud and error trends over time
- Data to assess current DWP fraud and error policy and evaluating recent changes to these or business processes
- Policy development and evaluation by fraud and error policy stakeholders and local authorities
- The evidence base for assessing the potential effect of future fraud and error policy options
- Robust data to inform future measurement options
- Understanding the full breakdown of causes of fraud and error
- Monitoring how the fraud and error got into the system (e.g. at claim start or in-claim)
- Monitoring the effect of the economic cycle on fraud and error
- Informing future measurement options

Outside DWP the Fraud and Error in the Benefits System statistics (and underlying datasets) are available externally in the following ways:

- Providing general information on the levels of fraud and error in Great Britain
- Parliamentary Questions and Freedom of Information requests
- Providing estimates of Fraud and Error for the DWP Resource Accounts:
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/corporate%2Dpublications/#resourceaccounts>
and the DWP Annual report:
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/corporate%2Dpublications/#deptrep>
- Data to measure Government performance relating to the DWP Business Plan. The latest plan at the time of publication of this document is here: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/DWP-Business-Plan1.pdf>. In particular structural reform priority 1: Reform the welfare system and action 1.9: To reduce the level of benefit expenditure overpaid to a maximum of 1.7% by 2015. Use this web page to find the latest business plans:
<http://www.number10.gov.uk/tag/business-plans>.

- The benchmark measure for the Fraud and Error Strategy: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/tackling-fraud-and-error.pdf>
- Providing estimates for fraud within National Fraud Authority reports, such as the Annual Fraud Indicator: <http://www.attorneygeneral.gov.uk/nfa/WhatAreWeSaying/Pages/our-reports.aspx>
- Providing estimates for fraud within the Cabinet Office Counter Fraud Task Force reports: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/millions-saved-through-fraud-taskforce-pilots-0>

Valid Uses of DWP Fraud and Error in the Benefits System Statistics

The Fraud and Error in the Benefits System Statistics can be used for:

- Obtaining an estimate for the total amount over/under paid, and broken down into fraud, customer error and official error, across all benefits administered by the DWP and Local Authorities.
- Obtaining an estimate for the amount over/under paid by benefit, and broken down into fraud, customer error and official error, across all benefits administered by the DWP and Local Authorities.
- Obtaining estimates for the amount over paid by benefit, broken down into the causes of fraud, customer error and official error, across Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, Pension Credit and Housing Benefit.

Areas of Unmet Need

Customers (both within DWP and externally) sometimes request the following:

- More timely release of statistics. National Statistics are released around eight months after the reference period. This is to allow for claim reviews and processing time and the subsequent analytical processes.
- Local area estimates. Our current statistics cover the whole of Great Britain and geographic breakdowns are not provided. Due to our statistics being based on a sample, the sample sizes are currently too small to allow statistically valid geographic breakdowns.

How to comment and get involved

We recognise that our customers will have different needs and we use a range of different methods to contact them. We frequently meet internal DWP customers to discuss their needs and requirements. As for external stakeholders, we often contact the National Audit Office and we occasionally contact HM Revenue and Customs and the National Fraud Authority.

Engagement with other external customers is usually through the statistical pages of the DWP website where:

- we invite users to share their comments or views about our official statistics or to simply to advise us how they use our statistics;
- we advise users of updates and changes to our statistics through the News and Announcements web page;
- where appropriate, we will consult with customers on developments and changes to our statistics methodologies, publications or publication processes.

The main method for customers to contact DWP about statistical matters is via email or phone. Contact details can be found on the contacts pages of the DWP statistics website, where users can also subscribe to a mailing list for news of DWP statistical publications:
<http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=contacts>