

Jobseekers Benefit Control Survey 2022

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Department of Social Protection (DSP) undertakes Control Surveys to establish baseline incorrect benefit levels for social welfare schemes, with a view to designing processes and control measures specifically targeted to minimise the level of future risk.

Jobseeker's Benefit is a payment for people between 18 and 66 years of age who become fully or partly unemployed and have paid the required pay-related social insurance (PRSI) contributions.

For the survey, 600 randomly selected JB claims in payment during the week of the 14th of February 2022 were reviewed to assess compliance with the rules of the scheme.

The headline reporting metric for this Control Survey is shown as Net Loss to Government, which is the overpayment rate established by the survey, minus transfers to other schemes, minus the value of overpayments recovered.

1.2 Methodology and categorisation of results

The results are categorised based on the decisions taken on each case in the sample:

- ✓ **Benefit Correct:** Includes cases where no evidence was found that any conditions for receipt of benefit, or the rate of benefit in payment, were not satisfied.
- ✓ Incorrect Benefit: Includes cases where one or more of the eligibility conditions for receipt of benefit, or the rate of benefit in payment, are not being met, such that a revised decision has been made, or should in principle be made, leading to a change in the payment rate for this customer or the termination of the claim. Cases of incorrect benefit are further classified based on the decisions of the Deciding Officer in each case included in the survey sample:
 - Suspected fraud arises where there is sufficient evidence that the customer deliberately provided false or misleading information or wilfully concealed relevant information.
 - Customer error refers to cases where a customer provided inaccurate or incomplete information or there was an unreported change in a person's circumstances; and
 - Official error refers to cases where benefits are paid incorrectly due to inaction, delay or mistakes made by the Department's staff.

The main results of the survey are set out in section 2.

2. Main results

The survey finds that Net Loss to Government for JB was 6.8% of total expenditure.

Table 1 – Main results of Jobseekers Benefit Control Survey

		Ту	Type of claim impact (percentage of expenditure)						
iture	Predominant category	Over- payment	Transfers with other schemes	Recoveries	Net Loss to Government		Under- payment		
Expenditure	Suspected Fraud	5.5	0				0		
	Official Error	0.2	0				0		
ige of	Customer Error	2.5	0.2				-0.3		
ercentage	Total	8.2	0.2	-1.2	6.8		-0.3		
Perc	95% CI Lower	6.1	-0.2	-1.2	4.8		-0.0		
	95% CI Upper	10.3	0.5	-1.2	9.0		-0.7		

Source: DSP. Figures may not add due to rounding.

Table 2 - Outcomes by predominant category and eligibility component (percentage of expenditure) - Overpayments

	One de seio sont in comment	Predominant category					
ture	Predominant incorrect benefit component	Suspected Fraud	Official Error	Customer Error	All Over- payments		
expenditure ted	Customer failed to supply required information	2.6	0	0	2.6		
of	Customer does not meet basic eligibility criteria	2.9	0.2	1.8	4.9		
itage aff	Additional allowances are not correct	0	0.0	0.3	0.3		
Percentage aff	Other unreported change in circumstances	0	0	0.3	0.3		
P	Total	5.5	0.2	2.5	8.1		

3. Scheme characteristics

3.1 Overview

Jobseeker's Benefit is a payment for people between 18 and 66 years of age who become fully or partly unemployed and have paid the required pay-related social insurance (PRSI) contributions. Jobseeker's Benefit is paid for 6 months or 9 months depending on the number of social insurance contributions paid.

The characteristics of the scheme on the date of sample selection are summarised below in Table 3:

Table 3: Characteristics of the scheme

Date	Characteristic	Sample	Population
	Age (mean, median)	41, 40	40, 38
	% men	55%	55%
February 2022 (600 Cases)	% women	45%	45%
	Claim duration - months (mean, median)	1, 1	1, 1
	Payment (mean, median)	215, 208	213, 208

The eligibility conditions for JB are summarised below, and further information is available at gov.ie - Jobseeker's Benefit (www.gov.ie).

3.2 Eligibility conditions

To qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit, an applicant must:

- · be fully or partly unemployed
- be under 66 years of age
- be capable of work and be available for full-time work
- · be genuinely seeking work
- be unemployed for at least 4 days out of every 7
- have the required paid PRSI contributions at class A, H or P

An applicant can work for up to 3 days a week and still get Jobseeker's Benefit for the other days if they are available for full-time work.

Social insurance (PRSI) contributions

To qualify for Jobseeker's Benefit, you need:

At least 104 weeks of Class A, H or P PRSI paid contributions or at least 156 Class S PRSI contributions since you first started work

And

39 weeks of A, H or P PRSI paid or credited in the relevant tax year* (a minimum of 13 weeks must be paid contributions**)

Or

26 weeks of A, H or P PRSI paid in the relevant tax year and 26 weeks of PRSI paid in the tax year immediately before the relevant tax year.

(*The relevant tax year is the second-last complete tax year before the year in which your claim is made. So, for claims made in 2023, the relevant tax year is 2021)

**If you do not have 13 paid contributions in the relevant tax year, you must have paid 13 contributions in any of the following years:

The 2 tax years before the relevant tax year

The last complete tax year

The current tax year.

3.3 Payment rates

Rate of payment will depend on average weekly earnings in the governing contribution year.

Full rates at the time of the survey were as follows:

Full weekly payment	€208.00
Extra payment for qualified adult	€138.00
Extra payment for qualified child under 12	€40.00 (full-rate), €20.00 (half-rate)
Extra payment for qualified child 12 and over	€48.00 (full rate), €24.00 (half rate)

If an applicant was working part-time during the governing contribution year and their average earnings were less than €300 a week, full rate of payment would not apply.

4. Survey Findings & Conclusions

4.1 Survey findings

The Net Loss to Government arising from JB is 6.8% of scheme expenditure. This is made up of the overpayment rate established by the survey of 8.2% of expenditure, minus 1.2% of expenditure recovered from overpayments in the relevant years, and 0.2% transfers to other schemes. Some 0.8% of claims were found to have been underpaid.

4.2 Risk analysis by cohort

Customers aged 55 and older were less likely to have an incorrect payment compared to all the other age groups. None of the other age categories were significantly different.

The majority of suspected fraud cases were as a result of customers failing to notify the Department of returning to work.

In a small percentage of cases, the customer could not be contacted and there was no evidence of employment.

Failure to notify increases in spouse/partners earnings resulted in qualified adult rates to be reduced or disallowed.

There were no differences according to:

- Gender
- Nationality
- · Province of residence
- Payment method; or
- Age of the claim

4.3 Measures which will improve control activity

The Covid 19 pandemic has impacted control reviews on the Jobseekers Benefit scheme in the earlier part of 2022. In addition, the Ukrainian crisis beginning in February 2022 resulted in many control staff being re-assigned to decisions work to ensure that refugees were catered for on arrival. The transition to Jobseekers from PUP and returning to work during this period may have also led to more errors occurring than normal. The Department was also going through a transition phase in re-aligning regional structures which led to less control review activity in the jobseeker's area.

From the analysis of the Jobseekers Benefit Survey, the Department will ensure that a greater emphasis will be placed on Data matching (by the Business Analytics Unit, BAU) with the Revenue employment data (RTLU) available. Regular monthly data matches will be forwarded

to INTREO offices and regional control teams. These cases will be prioritised for control reviews.

A review of the control structures within INTREO offices is taking place with a view to setting up dedicated regional control teams to ensure that reviews, identified by BAU are acted on in a timely manner.

The Department will continue to utilize the resources and experience of the Department's Special Investigation Unit to target high risk sectors where fraud and abuse is considered to be the most prevalent, e.g., non-residency, concurrent working and claiming.

Control Division is currently rolling out a control roadshow to all staff involved in control work, with the emphasis on prioritization of various categories of reviews, correct decision making and overall control procedures.

A greater emphasis will be put on ensuring that casual Jobseekers are reviewed in a timelier manner to ensure change in circumstances are dealt with, although it must also be acknowledged that it is not possible to continually review casuals for every change due to the fluctuations involved in the current working environment.

The Department will examine, with scheme areas, appropriate methods of informing customers of their requirements to notify any changes in circumstances that will affect entitlements. This will include increasing mailshots, and actively informing customers at various interventions at signings, activation meetings etc.

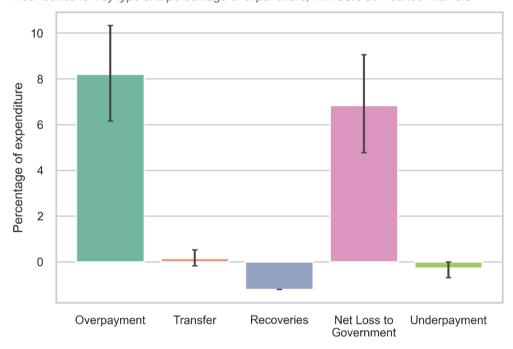
Annex I – Detailed Survey Results

The results of the survey are presented in this section. Bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals for the results are shown both graphically and numerically below each table.

Incorrect benefit by type and category

Percentage of Expenditure

Figure 1 - Incorrect benefit by type and percentage of expenditure, with 95% confidence intervals



Incorrect benefit by type, with 95% confidence intervals

Table 0-1 - Incorrect benefit by type and predominant category (percentage of expenditure affected)

		Ту	Type of claim impact (percentage of expenditure)						
iture	Predominant category	Over- payment	Transfers with other schemes	Recoveries	Net Loss to Government		Under- payment		
Expenditure	Suspected Fraud	5.5	0				0		
	Official Error	0.2	0				0		
i ge of	Customer Error	2.5	0.2				-0.3		
Percentage	Total	8.2	0.2	-1.2	6.8		-0.3		
Perc	95% CI Lower	6.1	-0.2	-1.2	4.8		-0.0		
	95% CI Upper	10.3	0.5	-1.2	9.0		-0.7		

Weekly expenditure impact

Table 0-2 – Incorrect benefit by type, and predominant category (weekly expenditure impact (€m))

n)		Type of claim impact (percentage of expenditure)						
mpact (€m)	Predominant category	Over- payment	Transfers with other schemes	Recoveries	Net Loss to Government		Under- payment	
impa	Suspected Fraud	0.4	0				0	
	Official Error	0.0	0				0	
expenditure	Customer Error	0.2	0.0				-0.0	
	Total	0.5	0.0	-0.1	0.4		-0.0	
Weekly	95% CI Lower	0.4	0	-0.1	0.3		-0.0	
We	95% CI Upper	0.7	0.3	-0.1	0.6		-0.0	

Percentage of claims affected

Figure 2 – Cases of incorrect benefit by type, with 95% confidence intervals

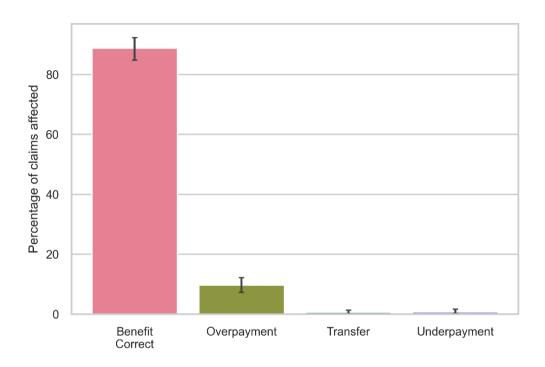


Table 0-3 – Percentage of Overpayment and Transfer cases by type and category

	Dura da maior a mil	Type of claim impact (percentage of cases affected)					
affected	Predominant category	Overpayment	Transfers with other schemes		Underpayment		
	Suspected Fraud	5.8	0		0		
cases	Official Error	0.3	0		0		
ō	Customer Error	3.5	0.7		0.8		
ıtage	Total	9.7	0.7		0.8		
Percentage	95% CI Lower	7.3	0.1		0.2		
Pe	95% CI Upper	12.2	1.3		1.7		

Predominant and overlapping error categories

More than one category of incorrect benefit may be detected in respect of a given claim. In such cases, the *predominant* category is assigned according to the following hierarchy: 1–Suspected Fraud; 2–Official Error; 3–Customer Error. The tables in this section show which cases were affected by more than one type of incorrect benefit and provide an additional breakdown of the Fraud or Error categories found.

Figure 3 – Overpayments by **predominant** and **overlapping** category (**explanatory table**)

	↓↓ All cases affected by this category (including overlaps)					
Predominant category ↓↓	Suspected Fraud (all)	Official Error (all)	Customer Error (all)			
1. <i>Predominantly</i> Suspected Fraud	Suspected Fraud (all cases)	←←of which, Suspected Fraud AND Official Error	Not possible to combine			
2. <i>Predominantly</i> Official Error	Cases with Suspected Fraud can't be predominantly Official Error	Official Error (NO Suspected Fraud)	←←of which, Official Error AND Customer Error			
3. Predominantly Customer Error	Cases with Suspected Fraud can't be predominantly Customer Error	Cases with Official Error can't be predominantly Customer Error	Customer Error (NO Official Error)			

Table 0-4 – Overpayments by predominant and overlapping category (percentage of expenditure affected)

of	Predominant	↓↓ Overlapping category (percentage of expenditure)					
ercentage (Expenditure	category ↓↓	Suspected Fraud (any)	Official Error (any)	Customer Error (any)			
end	1. Suspected Fraud	5.5	0				
erce Exp	2. Official Error		0.2	0.2			
P. B.	3. Customer Error			2.5			

Table 0-5 – Overpayments by **predominant** and **overlapping** category (**percentage of claims** affected)

of ted	Predominant	↓↓ Overlapping category (percentage of claims affected)					
i ge (category ↓↓	Suspected Fraud (any)	Official Error (any)	Customer Error (any)			
Percentage Claims Affecte	1. Suspected Fraud	5.8	0				
erc aim	2. Official Error		0.3	0.2			
₽ ♡	3. Customer Error			3.5			

Table 0-6 – Overpayments by **predominant** and **overlapping** category, with details (**percentage of expenditure** affected)

			↓↓ Overlapping category, with details (percentage of expenditure)								
			Suspected Fraud		C	Official Error			Customer Error		
	Percentage of Expenditure	Predominant category ↓↓	Materially incorrect information	Wilful concealment	Decision error	Failed to act on information	Length of time since last claim review	Inaccurate information provided	Unreported change in circumstances		
		1. Suspected Fraud	3.6	1.9	0	0	0				
		2. Official Error			0.0	0.2	0	0	0.2		
		3. Customer Error						1.9	0.6		

Table 0-7 – Overpayments by **predominant** and **overlapping** category, with details (**percentage of claims** affected)

	Predominant category	↓↓ Overlapping category, with details (percentage of claims affected)						
		Suspected Fraud		Official Error			Customer Error	
Percentage of Claims Affected		Materially incorrect information	Wilful concealment	Decision error	Failed to act on information	Length of time since last claim review	Inaccurate information provided	Unreported change in circumstances
	Suspected Fraud	3.7	2.2	0	0	0		
	2. Official Error			0.2	0.2	0	0	0.2
	3. Customer Error						2.5	1.0

Outcomes by incorrect eligibility condition

Figure 4: Incorrect Benefit by eligibility criteria and expenditure impact

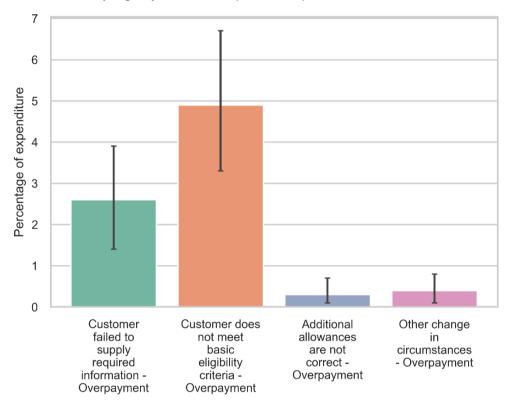


Table 0-8 –Outcomes by predominant category and eligibility component (percentage of expenditure) - Overpayments

Percentage of expenditure affected	Don't and the same	Predominant category				
	Predominant incorrect benefit component	Suspected Fraud	Official Error	Customer Error	All Over- payments	
	Customer failed to supply required information	2.6	0	0	2.6	
	Customer does not meet basic eligibility criteria	2.9	0.2	1.8	4.9	
	Additional allowances are not correct	0	0.0	0.3	0.3	
	Other unreported change in circumstances	0	0	0.3	0.3	
	Total	5.5	0.2	2.5	8.1	

Figure 5 - Incorrect benefit by eligibility criteria and number of cases affected

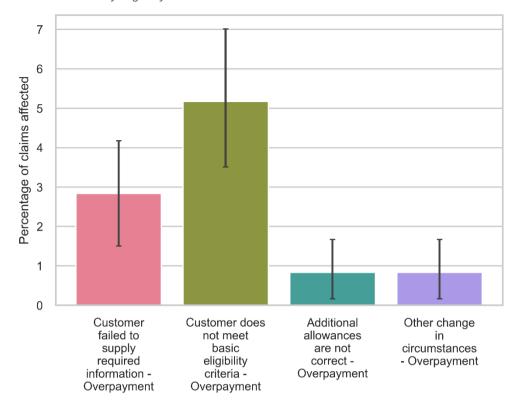


Table 0-9 - Percentage of Overpayment cases by predominant category and eligibility component

		Predominant category				
Percentage of cases affected	Predominant incorrect benefit component	Suspected Fraud	Official Error	Customer Error	All Over- payments	
	Customer failed to supply required information	2.8	0	0	2.8	
	Customer does not meet basic eligibility criteria	3.0	0.2	2.0	5.2	
	Additional allowances are not correct	0	0.2	0.7	0.8	
	Other unreported change in circumstances	0	0	0.8	0.8	
	Total	5.8	0.3	3.5	9.5	

