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Coverage: Great Britain  
Theme: Social and Welfare

## Fraud and Error in Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance April 2003 to March 2004

Estimates of the levels of fraud and error occurring in claims for working age Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance over the period April 2003 to March 2004 are published as National Statistics today.

The report can be read at the Department for Work and Pensions website at:  
[www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd2/fraud.asp](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd2/fraud.asp)

### Public Service Agreement Target

The Department for Work and Pensions has Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets to reduce fraud and error by 33 per cent by March 2004 and by 50 per cent by March 2006. The PSA target measure is the estimated percentage of benefit overpaid due to fraud and error, including official error, in working age Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance.

The baseline from which progress is measured is the level over the 12 months from October 1997 to September 1998 published in a Government Statistical Service report in October 1999.

For the period April 2003 to March 2004, the estimated fraud and error overpayment on IS and JSA was 6.4 per cent the benefit paid over the year. This is a 38 per cent reduction from the baseline figure of 10.4 per cent. The annual amount overpaid was £840 million.

Within the 38 per cent reduction, one percentage point results from a change in the methodology for recording fraud and error. The reduction arising from a real reduction in fraud and error is therefore estimated to be 37 per cent. Since this exceeds 33 per cent, the Department has achieved its target for March 2004.

### Interpretation of Results

The results are derived from the analysis of a sample of IS and JSA claims, rather than of all IS and JSA claims, so they are subject to statistical uncertainties. These uncertainties have been quantified and are presented in the results as 95 per cent confidence limits. As a result of adjustments to deal with data quality problems, these confidence limits are wider than in previous estimates. Further sources of uncertainty have not been quantified, but are not negligible.

Fraud is by its nature a covert activity, and it is possible that some frauds and errors on sample cases will not have been uncovered. In addition, there are instances where fraud was suspected but not admitted or otherwise proven.

### Notes for Editors:

1. "Fraud and Error in Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance April 2003 to March 2004" is a National Statistics publication and is produced to the high professional standards outlined in the National Statistics Code of Practice. National Statistics publications undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

2. # is equivalent to pounds.

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