

## Response to Commons Select Committee Inquiry into Benefit Sanctions from New Policy Institute

This short note is in response to the second point in which the committee expressed an interest

- Whether particular groups of ESA and JSA claimants (by impairment type; age; gender etc.) are proportionately more likely to be sanctioned than others

The analysis below focuses on JSA claimants and shows that younger claimants are far more likely to be sanctioned than older claimants and men more likely than women. Consequently, young men are the group most likely to be sanctioned.

### Analysis

All the data in the analysis that follows comes from official sources, either DWP via the Stat Xplore website in the case of the sanctions data (<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>) or ONS via the Nomis website (<http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>) in the case of the JSA claimant numbers. The time period analysed is the year from July 2013 to June 2014. Data is for the UK.

The sanction numbers are based on numbers of referrals, not numbers of individuals. An individual could be referred for sanction more than once over a 12 month period. To ensure consistency, the JSA figures are for numbers of claims, not numbers of people claiming. A person may make more than one claim in a 12 month period.

In the period we analyse, there were 2,888,000 individual JSA claims and 1,765,000 referrals for sanction. Of these 1,765,000 referrals, 851,000 resulted in a decision to apply a sanction, i.e. stop the payment of the benefit. Roughly, then, the number of referrals for sanction is equal to 60% of the claims made and the number of actual sanctions is equal to around 30% of claims.

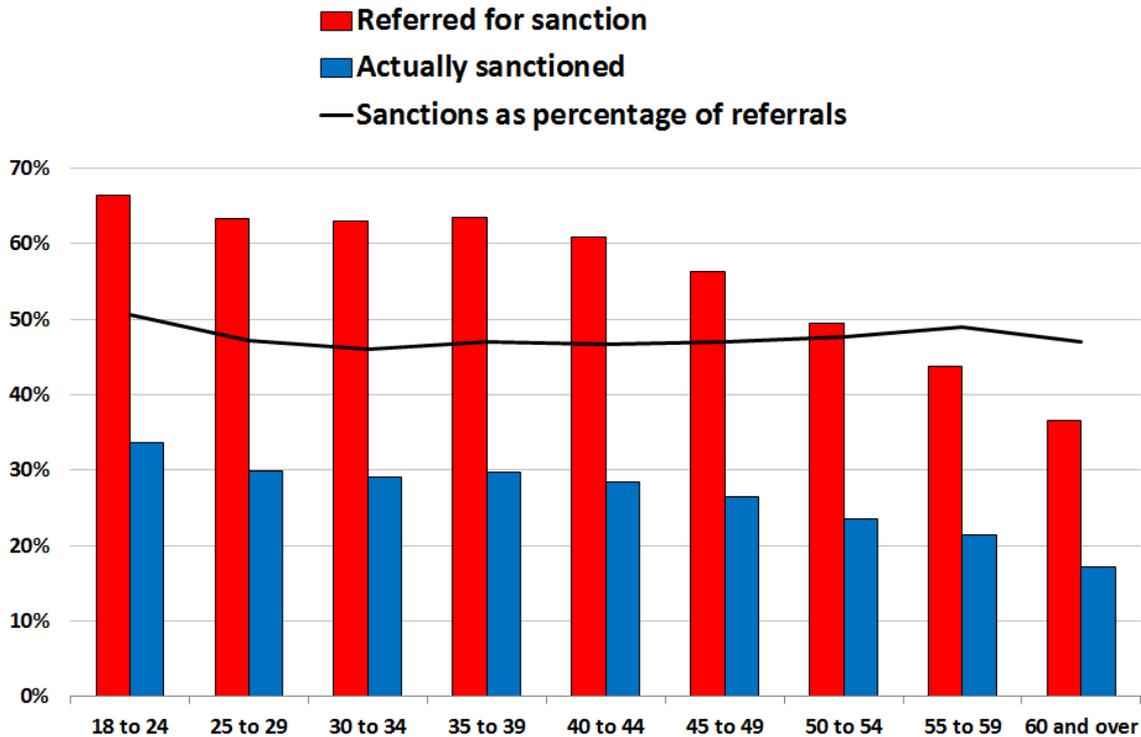
Note that this is not (quite) the same as saying that 30% of claims resulted in a sanction. Some of the sanctions given will relate to claims pre dating this period. Some of the claims made in the period may be sanctioned after June 2014. But we think this is a fair way of comparing

### Differences by age

The graph below shows two things. It shows the number of sanction referrals for each age group as a proportion of all JSA claims. This is shown in red. Not all those

referrals result in an actual sanction being levied, however, as we showed above. So the blue column shows, again as a proportion of JSA claims, the number of actual sanctions brought. The black line shows actual sanctions as a proportion of referrals.

**Graph 1 – Referrals for sanction and actual sanctions as a proportion of JSA claims by age group**



Referrals for sanctions are equivalent to around two thirds of all JSA claims among the under 25s. This is higher than for any other age group, and much higher than the over 50s.

A slightly higher proportion of referrals result in actual sanctions for under 25s than for other age groups – over 50%. This means that actual sanctions are equivalent to around one third of all JSA claims among the under 25s, higher than any other age groups.

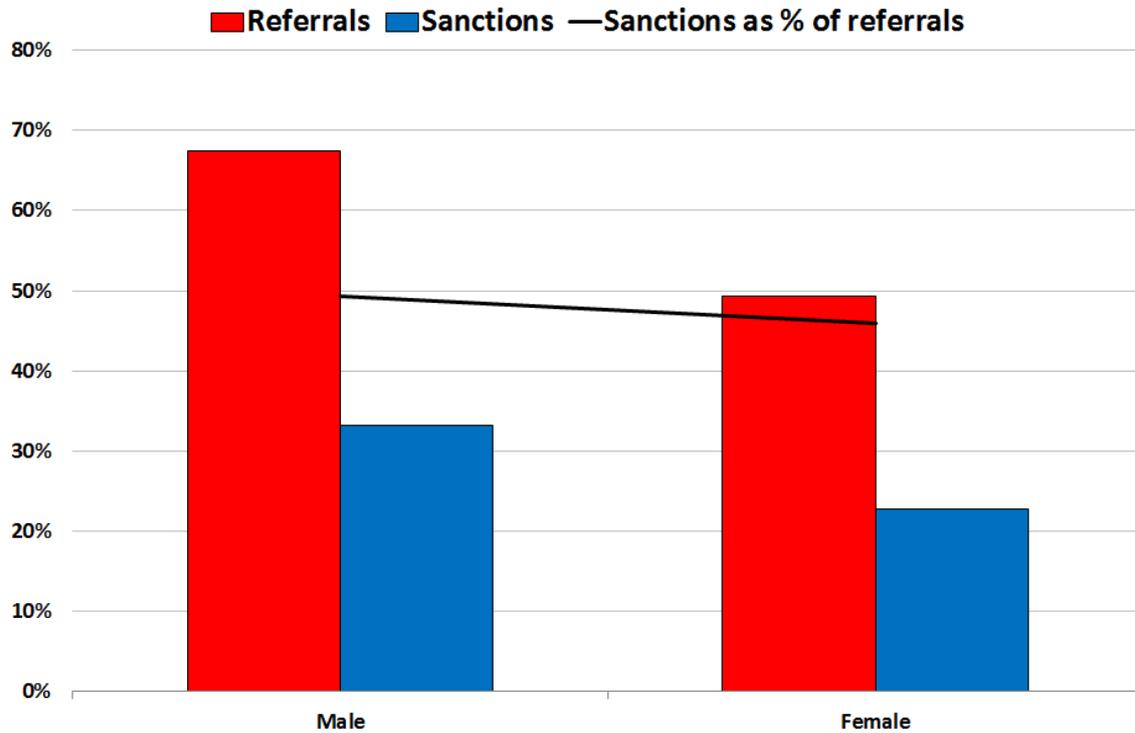
In summary, then, young people are more likely to be referred for sanction, and, once referred, more likely to actually receive a sanction than other age groups.

## Differences by gender

The following analysis takes a similar approach, but this time looking at differences by gender. Again, the red bar shows referrals as a proportion of claims, the blue bar

actual sanctions as a proportion of claims and the black line the proportion of referrals that convert into an actual sanction.

## Graph 2 – Referrals for sanction and actual sanctions as a proportion of JSA claims by gender

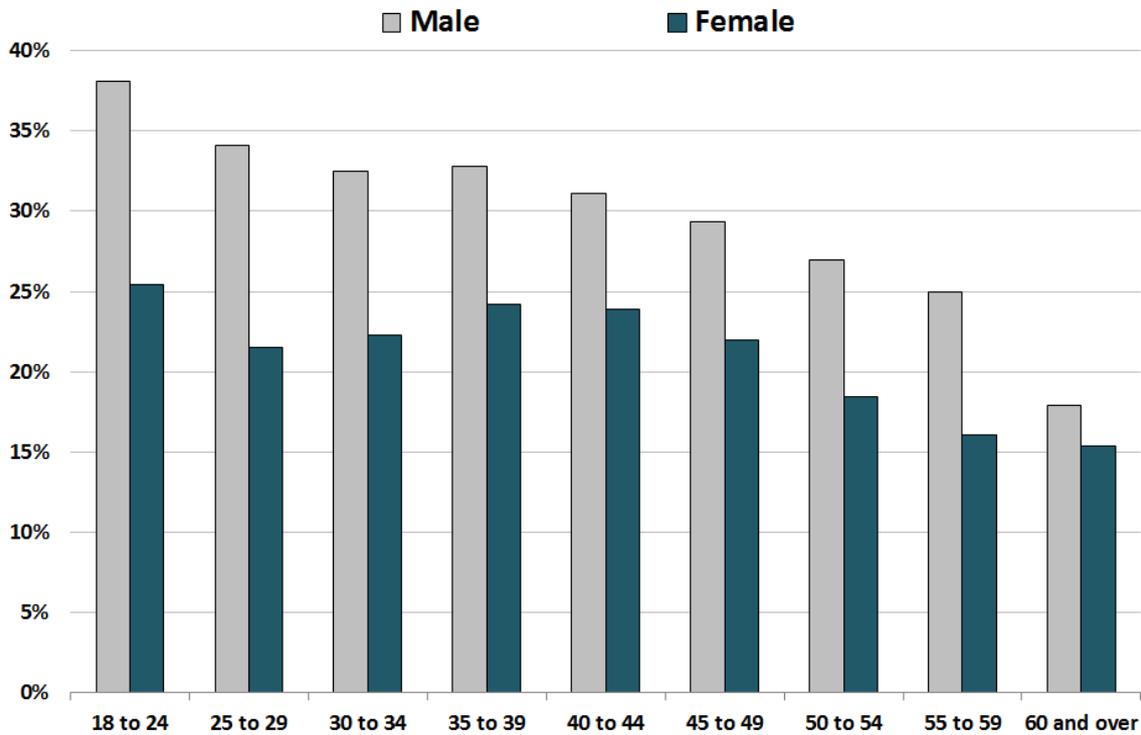


Referrals for sanctions for male JSA claimants amount to around two thirds of all claims, compared to around half for women. Actual sanctions are equivalent to around one in three claims made by men and less than one in four by women. Men are more likely to be referred for sanction, and, one referred, more likely to receive an actual sanction.

## Gender and age combined

The final stage of the analysis is to look at the combined effects of age and gender. We have seen already that younger claimants, particularly those aged under 25, are more likely to be sanctioned than older claimants. The next graph looks at whether young men are more likely to be sanctioned than older men and older women. For clarity, it only shows actual sanctions, as a proportion of claims.

**Graph 3 –Actual sanctions as a proportion of JSA claims by gender and age**



Actual sanctions for male claimants aged 18-24 equal just under 40% of all claims. For women, the figure is closer to 25%. The difference by age is more pronounced for men, with the likelihood of sanctioning decreasing quite steadily with age, whereas women between 35 and 44 are more likely to be sanctioned than those aged 25 to 34. For any given age group, men are more likely to be sanctioned than women. For all bar the over 60s, the gap is at least 10 percentage points.

### Summary

Young people and male claimants are much more likely to be sanctioned than older claimants or women. Consequently, young men are at particularly high risk of sanctioning.