

Work Capability Assessments outcomes: ESA claimants with visual impairment and other diseases of the eye

12 September 2012 (Revised Edition)

Revisions Summary

This edition is a correction to the report originally published on 12 September 2012.

Revision – February 2013

The introduction section has been amended to show the correct dates for which data is presented in the publication. The correction only affects the text in the introduction and not any data shown in the publication.

Introduction

This statistical release presents information on new claims for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in Great Britain. It provides information on the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) outcomes for claimants with visual impairment (including blindness) and other diseases of the eye¹. The figures are derived from administrative data held by the Department for Work and Pensions and assessment data provided by Atos Healthcare. This analysis presents information on new claims for ESA only. It does not contain incapacity benefits reassessments to determine eligibility for ESA.

The Department regularly publishes official statistics on ESA and the WCA. The latest report was published in July 2012 and can be found on the internet at the link below:

http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa_wca

This publication shows the outcomes of the initial WCA for new ESA claims between June and November 2011 for claimants with visual impairment (including blindness) and other diseases of the eye². This can be compared to Table 1a of the July 2012 publication (see link above) for all ESA Work Capability Assessments.

Background

A key part of the ESA regime is the WCA process, which is used to assess capability for work and eligibility for benefit. Within this the service contractor Atos Healthcare undertakes an assessment and, following the assessment, their recommendation is

¹ This covers the World Health Organisation (WHO) International Classification of Diseases (ICD) codes H16 – Keratitis, H20 – Iridocyclitis, H26 – Other cataract, H33 – Retinal detachments and breaks, H40 – Glaucoma, H44 - Disorders of globe, H47 – Other disorders of optic [2nd] nerve and visual pathways, H54 – Visual impairment including blindness (binocular or monocular), H55 – Nystagmus and other irregular eye movements and H57 – Other disorders of eye and adnexa.

² See footnote 1.

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passed on to DWP. A DWP Decision Maker then considers the WCA, alongside the other evidence relating to the claim, when making a decision on the claimant's ESA status. This will be one of the following:

Claimants can be found fit for work, meaning that despite their illness or disability they are able to undertake some forms of work. In this case their claim:

- closes and the claimant can move to Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA); or
- remains open following receipt of a challenge against the decision (either a reconsideration by DWP, or an appeal to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS)). If an appeal is made, the pre-assessment rates remain until the appeal has been heard.

Claimants can be found to have limited capability for work. In this instance, they are allowed the benefit and placed in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG). Those in this group are not expected to work, but are provided with help and support to prepare for work where possible. They receive a higher payment than those on JSA. Claimants can also appeal the decision to be put in the WRAG instead of the Support Group (SG); and

Claimants can be found to have limited capability for work and, in addition, limited capability for work related activity. In this situation, claimants are allowed the benefit and placed in the SG. Claimants in this group have the most severe functional impairments and so are provided with unconditional support and receive a higher premium than those in the WRAG.

Both WRAG and SG claims run until the initial or latest 'prognosis period' ends, which is usually, but not always, a standard length of time such as 3, 6, 12, 18 or 24 months based on the individual claimant's health and then have a repeat assessment.

More information on ESA is available on the DirectGov website at the following link:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/esa/DG_171894.

Visual impairment (including blindness) and other diseases of the eye

The following World Health Organisation (WHO) International Classification of Diseases (ICD10) codes³ have been used to identify claimants with visual impairment (including blindness) and other diseases of the eye:

- H16 – Keratitis,

³ The WHO website provides more detail on this code applied to Employment and Support Allowance cases at the following link: <http://www.who.int/classifications/icd/en/>

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- H20 – Iridocyclitis,
- H26 – Other cataract,
- H33 – Retinal detachments and breaks,
- H40 – Glaucoma,
- H44 – Disorders of globe,
- H47 – Other disorders of optic [2nd] nerve and visual pathways,
- H54 – Visual impairment including blindness (binocular or monocular),
- H55 – Nystagmus and other irregular eye movements and
- H57 – Other disorders of eye and adnexa.

Results

The table on the next page shows outcomes of the initial functional assessment by month of claim start between June and November 2011 (the latest information available) for Great Britain for claimants with visual impairment (including blindness) and other diseases of the eye⁴. Decisions made on these claims up until May 2012 are included in these statistics.

The table on the next page can be compared to Table 1a of the July 2012 publication for all ESA Work Capability Assessments.⁵

Annex

The analysis was produced in relation to the following Parliamentary Question (PQ):

- **PQ/12/113389 - Stephen Gilbert (St Austell and Newquay):** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many (a) blind and partially sighted people and (b) other jobseekers were declared fit for work following a work capability assessment in each month since June 2011.

David Green (david.green11@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)
Department for Work and Pensions

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⁴ See footnote 1.

⁵ See http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa_wca

Table: Outcome of initial functional assessment by month of claim start for claimants with visual impairment (including blindness) and other diseases of the eye¹, Great Britain

Scope: initial functional assessment – the first assessment of the Employment and Support Allowance claim.

The outcome recorded is the final DWP Decision Maker's decision or the recommendation made by the Atos Healthcare Professional where the Decision Maker's decision is not yet available.

Coverage: Great Britain.

Periods: all statistics are based on the calendar month that the claim was first made.

Period ²	Volume of caseloads in thousands									Percentage of completed assessment caseload				
	Outcomes of claims where functional assessment has been completed					Status of claims where functional assessment has not been completed			Total caseload	Outcomes of claims where functional assessment has been completed				
	Entitled to Employment and Support Allowance:			Fit for Work	Any outcome	Closed before assessment	Still in progress	Any status		Entitled to Employment and Support Allowance:			Fit for Work	Any outcome
	Work Related Activity Group	Support Group	Either group						Work Related Activity Group	Support Group	Either group			
(a)	(b)	(a+b)	(c)	(a+b+c)	(d)	(e)	(d+e)	(a+b+c+d+e)	(A)	(B)	(A+B)	(C)	(A+B+C)	
Jun-11	30	40	70	70	130	90	20	100	240	25	26	51	49	100
Jul-11	60	30	90	90	180	100	10	110	290	31	17	49	51	100
Aug-11	60	30	90	70	160	80	20	100	270	34	21	55	45	100
Sep-11	50	40	90	80	170	100	30	130	300	28	26	54	46	100
Oct-11	40	50	90	70	160	110	50	160	320	23	33	56	44	100
Nov-11	40	30	70	70	140	100	90	190	320	29	23	51	49	100
<i>Total</i>	<i>270</i>	<i>230</i>	<i>490</i>	<i>450</i>	<i>940</i>	<i>580</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>790</i>	<i>1,730</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>100</i>

Rounding: All caseload volumes have been rounded to the nearest 10 and percentages to the nearest percentage point; totals may not sum due to rounding.

Notes:

(1) This covers the WHO ICD10 codes H16 – Keratitis, H20 – Iridocyclitis, H26 – Other cataract, H33 – Retinal detachments and breaks, H40 – Glaucoma, H44 - Disorders of globe, H47 – Other disorders of optic [2nd] nerve and visual pathways, H54 – Visual impairment including blindness (binocular or monocular), H55 – Nystagmus and other irregular eye movements and H57 – Other disorders of eye and adnexa.

(2) the period cohorts Employment and Support Allowance claims to the calendar month that the claim was first made. There is a reporting lag of approximately 8-months at the issuing date of this statistical output owing to the time needed to process data and time allowed to enable each cohort's assessment phase to elapse;

(3) Data sources: Raw data used to identify benefit claimants, ESA claims, WCA process outcomes and statuses, and establish appeals results are: DWP's benefit administration datasets covering new claims (starting between 1 June 2011 and 30 November 2011); and Atos Healthcare's face to face assessment, ESA85, data and limited capability for work questionnaire, ESA50, data.

(4) Definitions: The data presented in this publication is taken from a dataset which combines the data on:

a claim is an inflow to ESA that is made from 1 June 2011, and not a pre-existing IB claim;

an outcome is where the assessment is completed; and

a status is where the assessment phase is not completed.