

Employment and Support Allowance – Incapacity Benefits Reassessments: Outcomes of Work Capability Assessments by duration of claim – update

16 November 2012

Background

In October 2008, existing benefits paid on grounds of incapacity, that is Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) and Income Support (IS) on the grounds of incapacity, were replaced with Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) for new claimants. Between October 2010 and Spring 2014 most claimants who receive IB, SDA and IS paid on the grounds of illness or disability will be assessed to see if they qualify for ESA and to ensure they get the help they need to return to work where appropriate.

On 6 November 2012, the Department published updated information on the outcomes of reassessments of incapacity benefits claimants for ESA in Great Britain. The publication can be found at the following link:

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

This publication gives further detail on the claims included in the publication mentioned above by breaking down the outcomes by the length of the previous incapacity benefits claim.

Results

Tables 1 and 2 provide a breakdown of both the *outcomes* of claims where the functional assessment has been completed and the *status* of claims where the functional assessment has not been completed by the length of the previous incapacity benefits claim. The length of the claim is measured as the period between the claim start date and the date the claim was referred for reassessment.

The figures in this publication do not reflect final outcomes, because they do not include the effect of appeals not yet heard. Therefore it is likely that the statistics underestimate the proportion of claimants who will ultimately be awarded ESA.

Table 1 presents the outcomes by duration of the previous incapacity benefits claim and column proportions – i.e. it shows the outcomes by duration as a proportion of all claims with that outcome. For example, Table 1 shows that of all those referred for incapacity benefits reassessment before the end of February 2012, 12 per cent had been on incapacity benefits for more than 15 years. It also shows that a higher proportion of those assessed to be in the Support Group have duration of 15 years or more, at 17 per cent.

Table 2 presents the same information but with row proportions – i.e. it shows the outcomes by duration as a proportion of all claims with that duration. For example,

Table 2 shows that of all those referred for incapacity benefits reassessment before the end of February 2012, 31 per cent were assessed as Fit for Work. However, this varies by duration of previous incapacity benefits claim; for those with duration of 5 years or less, 36 per cent have been assessed as fit for work, whereas for those with duration of 15 years or more, 22 per cent have been assessed as fit for work. There are also variations in the proportions being assessed to be in the Support Group of ESA by duration – with 19 per cent of those with duration of 5 years of less compared to 33 per cent for those with duration of 15 years or more.

Overall, these results suggest there is a link between duration of previous incapacity benefits claim and the outcome of incapacity benefits reassessment, with those with the longest durations more likely to be assessed as eligible for ESA. This may be as a result of them having longer term, or multiple health conditions.¹

The results in this publication are linked to the characteristics of the claimants included and should not be taken as an indication of future outcomes.

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¹ This statement should not be interpreted to mean that the above is anything more than a possible reason behind the differences, and there may also be other undetected factors at work.

Table 1: Outcome of Work Capability Assessments of existing IB claims, adjusted to account for the outcome of appeal, by duration of claim, Great Britain

Scope: initial functional assessment and appeal – reassessment of existing IB/SDA/IS claims or that following an appeal.

Coverage: Great Britain.

Periods: all statistics are based on claims have been referred for reassessment between October 2010 and February 2012.

Duration of incapacity benefits claim until referral for reassessment	Outcomes of claims where functional assessment has been completed					Status of claims where functional assessment has not been completed			Total caseload
	Entitled to Employment and Support Allowance:			Fit for Work	Any outcome	Closed before assessment	Still in progress	Any status	
	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)
<i>Caseload</i>									
5 years or less	48,400	25,400	73,800	49,100	122,900	5,800	6,000	11,800	134,700
More than 5 and less than 10 years	67,600	44,000	111,600	56,400	168,000	5,100	6,700	11,800	179,800
More than 10 and less than 15 years	36,600	23,500	60,100	27,100	87,200	2,000	3,000	5,000	92,200
More than 15 years	22,100	18,500	40,600	12,400	53,000	1,000	1,400	2,400	55,400
Total	174,800	111,300	286,100	145,000	431,100	13,800	17,200	31,000	462,100
<i>Proportions (outcomes by duration as a proportion of all claims with that outcome)</i>									
5 years or less	28	23	26	34	29	42	35	38	29
More than 5 and less than 10 years	39	40	39	39	39	37	39	38	39
More than 10 and less than 15 years	21	21	21	19	20	14	18	16	20
More than 15 years	13	17	14	9	12	7	8	8	12
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 2: Outcome of Work Capability Assessments of existing IB claims, adjusted to account for the outcome of appeal, by duration of claim, Great Britain

Scope: initial functional assessment and appeal – reassessment of existing IB/SDA/IS claims or that following an appeal.

Coverage: Great Britain.

Periods: all statistics are based on claims have been referred for reassessment between October 2010 and February 2012.

Duration of incapacity benefits claim until referral for reassessment	Outcomes of claims where functional assessment has been completed					Status of claims where functional assessment has not been completed			Total caseload
	Entitled to Employment and Support Allowance:			Fit for Work	Any outcome	Closed before assessment	Still in progress	Any status	
	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)
<i>Caseload</i>									
5 years or less	48,400	25,400	73,800	49,100	122,900	5,800	6,000	11,800	134,700
More than 5 and less than 10 years	67,600	44,000	111,600	56,400	168,000	5,100	6,700	11,800	179,800
More than 10 and less than 15 years	36,600	23,500	60,100	27,100	87,200	2,000	3,000	5,000	92,200
More than 15 years	22,100	18,500	40,600	12,400	53,000	1,000	1,400	2,400	55,400
Total	174,800	111,300	286,100	145,000	431,100	13,800	17,200	31,000	462,100
<i>Proportions (outcomes by duration as a proportion of all claims in that duration)</i>									
5 years or less	36	19	55	36	91	4	4	9	100
More than 5 and less than 10 years	38	24	62	31	93	3	4	7	100
More than 10 and less than 15 years	40	25	65	29	95	2	3	5	100
More than 15 years	40	33	73	22	96	2	3	4	100
Total	38	24	62	31	93	3	4	7	100

Rounding:

All values are rounded, cases to the nearest 100, percentages to the nearest full percent. Therefore addition of all volumes for outcomes and statuses may not sum to total cases, and addition of all percentages may not sum to 100 per cent.

Notes:

- 1) This note is a summary. A full explanation is available in the report: Employment and Support Allowance – Incapacity Benefits Reassessments: Outcomes of Work Capability Assessments, Great Britain which is published on the Department for Work and Pensions website: http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa_ibr
- 2) 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 from 27 October 2008); and
 - Atos Healthcare's face to face assessment (ESA85) data, and limited capability for work questionnaire (ESA50) data.
- 3) Definitions: The data presented in this publication is taken from a dataset which combines the data stated above. Under the counting rules, the units of analysis, used by the department:
 - a claim is a pre-existing IB, SDA or IS claim going through the reassessment process for ESA from 11 October 2010;
 - an outcome is where the assessment is completed, meaning in most cases that the limited capability for work questionnaire and face to face assessment has been undertaken;
 - a status is where the assessment phase is not completed; and
 - the duration is measured between the claim start date and the date the claim has been referred for reassessment. The date of a claimant's referral for reassessment is primarily based on the review date of their Personal Capability Assessment (PCA); for more details please see the report 'Employment and Support Allowance – Incapacity Benefits Reassessments: Outcomes of Work Capability Assessments, Great Britain', http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa_ibr.