



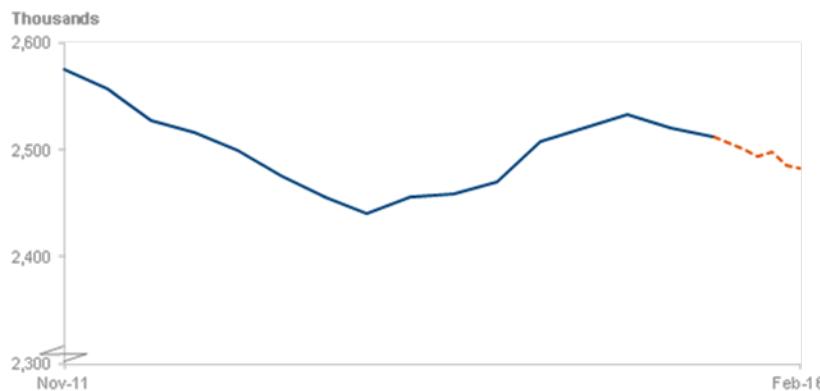
This monthly release aims to provide users with an early estimate of the number of people in working age inactive benefit client groups. These [official statistics](#) are designed to give indicative, timely information; they are not a substitute for the [National Statistics](#). They will be replaced by the quarterly National Statistics covering the same period when these are published. The National Statistics are the finalised figures.

Main stories

Early estimates at the end of February 2016:

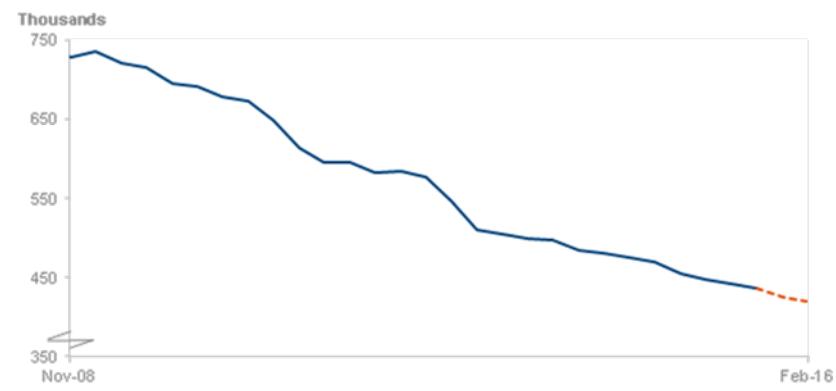
- 2.485 million working age Employment and Support Allowance/Inc incapacity Benefit claimants (7.3% of these claimants are in receipt of National Insurance Credits only).
- 420 thousand working age Income Support Lone Parent (ISLP) claimants.

Early Estimate – 2.485 million on ESA / IB at February 2016



This represents a decrease of 17 thousand since August 2015, the latest National Statistic.

Early Estimate - 420 thousand on ISLP at February 2016



This represents a decrease of 27 thousand since August 2015, the latest National Statistic.

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Thoughts? We welcome feedback

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What you need to know

This release contains the latest early estimates on the number of people in working age inactive benefit client groups up to 29th February 2016. The monthly early estimates for working age inactive benefit client groups are primarily sourced from data originally collected via administrative systems and are designed to give indicative, timely information; they are not a substitute for the National Statistics. They will be replaced by the quarterly National Statistics covering the same period when they are published. The National Statistics are the finalised figures.

The Office for National Statistics publishes the claimant count every month, one month in arrears. Consequently, the Early Estimates focus on the economically inactive groups of "incapacity benefits and Employment and Support Allowance" and "Income Support lone parents". The main reason for the lag in the National Statistics release is because we have to wait three months for a small but significant number of late claims to be processed. Waiting for these late claims makes the National Statistics figures more accurate than the early estimates where we simply predict the number of late claims based on historical levels.

To give an indication of their accuracy, over the period November 2014 to October 2015 the early estimates for ESA/IB have been revised by an average of 0.2%, with the biggest revision being 0.3% and the smallest being 0.03%. The early estimates for ISLP have been revised by an average of 0.2%, with the biggest revision being 0.43% and the smallest being less than 0.01%.

[Universal Credit](#) is being introduced in stages from April 2013 and will replace income-related Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support. It has been available to single people, couples and families in certain areas of the country, including the whole of the North West of England, since December 2014. It has since rolled out to single claimants nationally between February 2015 and April 2016. The full Universal Credit service is due to be rolled out nationally for all types of claimants from May 2016, completing in June 2018.

A small number of claimants who would have previously claimed income-related Employment and Support Allowance and Income Support are now claiming Universal Credit. The overall impact of Universal Credit on these statistics is therefore expected to be minimal. This will however vary for different areas of the country, particularly where Universal Credit has been in operation the longest such as the North West of England.

These statistics were released on 20th April 2016 according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority.

These statistics were produced in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

This means that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Early Estimates of Employment and Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefits Client Group

An estimate of the number of working age people claiming Employment and Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefits (in advance of the National Statistics publication).

Early estimates suggest a fall in the number of working age people claiming ESA/Incapacity Benefits

National Statistics to August 2015 and early estimates: September 2015 to February 2016

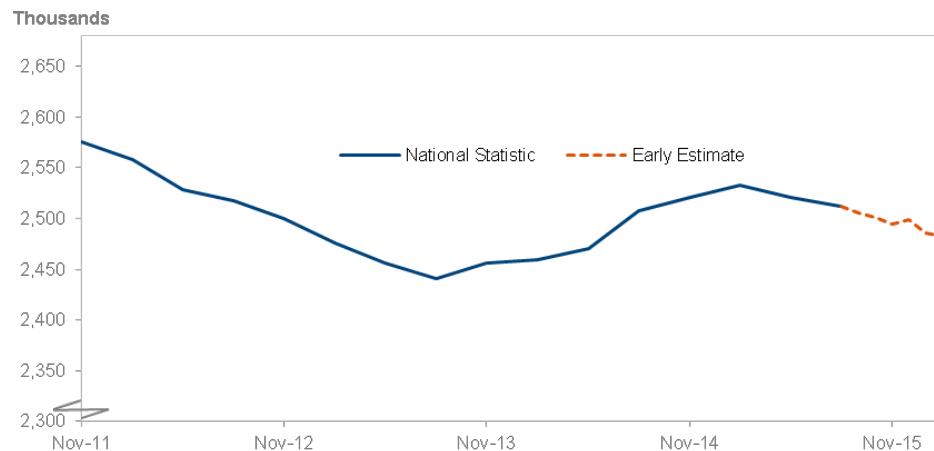


Table 1.1: Working-age ESA/IB client group August 2014 to February 2016

Time Series	National Statistic Number of Claimants (Thousands)	Early Estimate Number of Claimants (Thousands)
Aug-14	2,508.08	
Nov-14	2,520.27	
Feb-15	2,533.22	
May-15	2,521.17	
Aug-15	2,512.09	
Sep-15		2,505.00
Oct-15		2,500.00
Nov-15		2,495.00
Dec-15		2,500.00
Jan-16		2,485.00
Feb-16		2,485.00

The working-age ESA/IB early estimate for February 2016 is 2.485 million to the nearest 5,000. This represents a decrease of around 27,000 (1.1 per cent) since August 2015 (the latest National Statistic).

From October 2008 ESA replaced Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Income Support paid on the grounds of incapacity for new claims. Prior to this the "incapacity benefits group" referred to claimants of IB or Severe Disablement Allowance including working age people claiming Income Support on the grounds of incapacity. From April 2013, [Universal Credit](#) was introduced and will replace income-related Employment and Support Allowance as it is rolled out. See [here](#) for more information.

When the next quarterly National Statistics are published they will be included in Table 1.1, and the monthly early estimates from this quarter will be removed.

These figures are estimates of the final National Statistic, to give an indication of their accuracy, over the past year the early estimates in Table 1.1 have been revised by an average of 0.2 per cent. See [here](#) for more information.

These figures are likely to be affected by changes to State Pensions age. Please see the Welfare Reform section of the notes for further information.

The orange dotted line in the charts emphasises that the figures are estimates and official statistics.

Early Estimates of Employment and Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefits Client Group

Early estimates suggest a fall in the proportion of working age people claiming National Insurance (NI) credits only

National Statistics to August 2015 and early estimates: September 2015 to February 2016

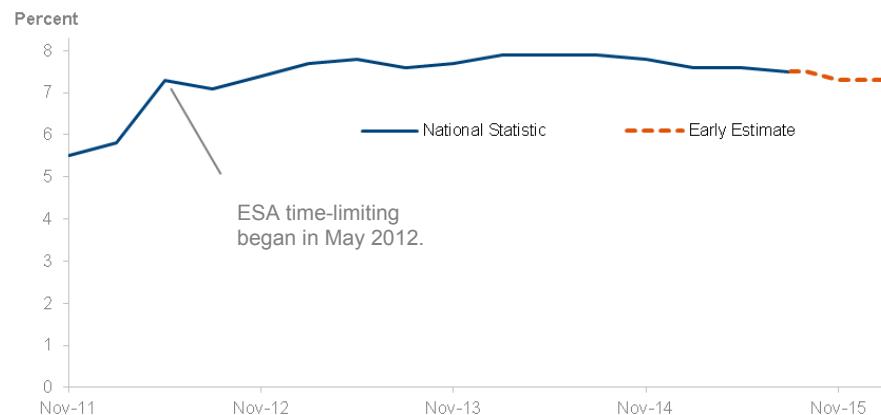


Table 1.2: Working-age ESA/IB client group claiming NI credits only
August 2014 to February 2016

Time Series	National Statistic Source Data	Early Estimate
	National Insurance Credits Only (Percentage)	National Insurance Credits Only (Percentage)
Aug-14	7.9%	
Nov-14	7.8%	
Feb-15	7.6%	
May-15	7.6%	
Aug-15	7.5%	
Sep-15		7.5%
Oct-15		7.4%
Nov-15		7.3%
Dec-15		7.3%
Jan-16		7.3%
Feb-16		7.3%

The working-age ESA/IB early estimate for February 2016 has decreased by around 27 thousand since August 2015 (the latest National Statistic).

In February 2016 approximately 92.7% of claimants were in receipt of benefit payments from Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Income Support (IS) or Pension Credit (PC).

The remaining **7.3% received National Insurance credits only** (i.e. no payment of IB, SDA, ESA, IS, PC). A noticeable rise in the proportion of claimants receiving National Insurance credits was seen in May 2012. This is due to the introduction of a 365 day limit on receipt of contribution based ESA for those in the Work Related Activity Group on 1 May 2012

When the next quarterly National Statistics figure is available it will be included in Table 1.2, and the monthly early estimates from this quarter will be removed.

The orange dotted line in the charts emphasises that the figures are estimates and official statistics.

Early Estimates of Income Support Lone Parent (ISLP) Client Group

An estimate of the number of working age people claiming Income Support (with a child under 16 and no partner) in advance of the National Statistics publication.

Early estimates suggest a continued fall in the number of people in the Income Support Lone Parent client group

National Statistics to August 2015 and early estimates: September 2015 to February 2016

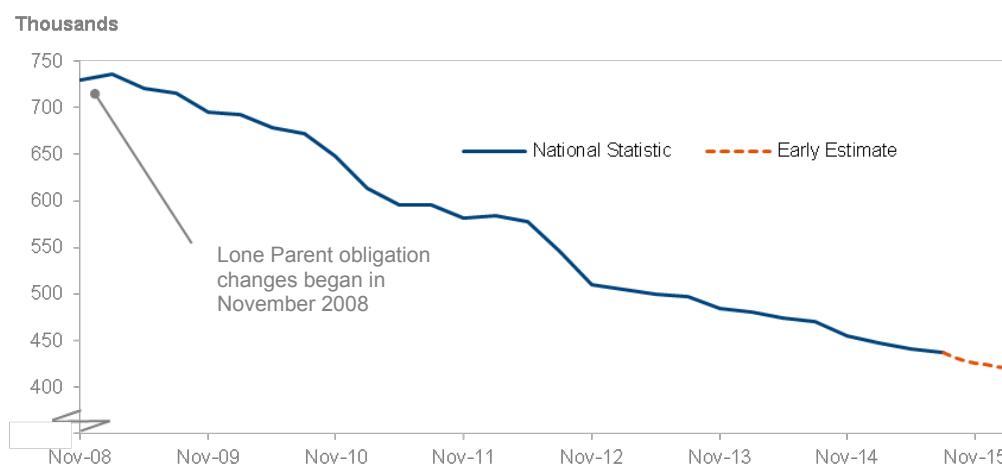


Table 2.1:ISLP client group August 2014 to February 2016

Time Series	National Statistic	Early Estimate
	Number of Claimants (Thousands)	Number of Claimants (Thousands)
Aug-14	470.82	
Nov-14	455.53	
Feb-15	448.11	
May-15	441.62	
Aug-15	437.38	
Sep-15		435.00
Oct-15		430.00
Nov-15		425.00
Dec-15		425.00
Jan-16		420.00
Feb-16		420.00

The working-age ISLP early estimate for February 2016 is 420 thousand to the nearest 5,000. This represents a fall of around 17,000 (4.0 per cent) since August 2015 (the latest National Statistic).

The figures are estimates of the final National Statistic, to give an indication of their accuracy, over the past year the early estimates have been revised by an average of 0.2 per cent. See [here](#) for more information.

The number of lone parents claiming Income Support has been affected by the Lone Parent Obligations policy changes which came into effect from 24 November 2008. As a result, new and repeat claimants with the following conditions were no longer entitled to Income Support:

- A youngest child aged 12 or over from November 2008;
- A youngest child aged 10 or over from October 2009;
- A youngest child aged 7 or over from October 2010.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced further changes and from May 2012 lone parents are only eligible to claim Income Support until their youngest child is five years old.

The age at which men and women reach State Pension age is gradually increasing. This will introduce a small increase to the number of working age benefit recipients and a small reduction to the number of pension age recipients.

From April 2013, [Universal Credit](#) was introduced and will replace Income Support as it is rolled out. See [here](#) for more information.

When the next quarterly National Statistics are published they will be included as a National Statistic in Table 2.1, and the monthly early estimates for this quarter will be removed from Table 2.1.

The orange dotted line in the chart emphasises that the figures are estimates and official statistics.

About these statistics

Supplementary Statistics

This document and older releases in the series can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dwp-statistical-summaries>

National benefit data (from 100% sources) underlying the charts and figures featured in this summary is available via our internet-based 100% tabulation tool. Further breakdowns by age, gender, duration of benefit, ethnicity and lower level geography e.g. region, local authority, parliamentary constituency are also available through the 100% tabulation tool which can be found here: <http://tabulation-tool.dwp.gov.uk/100pc/tabtool.html>

Statistics are also released via the NOMIS website and lower geographical statistics are available via the Neighbourhood Statistics [website](#).

Details of other National and Official Statistics produced by the Department for Work and Pensions can be found on Gov.uk via the following link:

- A schedule of statistical releases and a list of the most recent releases: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/about/statistics>

Feedback

DWP would like to hear your views on our statistical publications. If you use any of our statistics publications, we would be interested in hearing what you use them for and how well they meet your requirements. Please email DWP at stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.

An on-going questionnaire, enabling DWP to target future consultations at interested users; shaping the future direction of statistics development to address user needs; and helping ensure value for money, whilst giving users a structured way of expressing their views is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/205190/statistical_summary_questionnaire.doc

Completed questionnaires can be returned by e-mail to stats-consultation@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or by post to the following address:
Dissemination Team, Data and Analytics
Department for Work and Pensions
Room BP5201, Benton Park Road
Longbenton, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE98 1YX

Users can also join the “Welfare and Benefit Statistics” community at: <http://www.statsusersnet.org.uk>. DWP announces items of interest to users via this forum, as well as replying to users’ questions.

Where to find out more

Our Background Information Note, Quality Statement, Methodology Statement, and Uses and Users for the Statistic notes provide further information on DWP National and official benefit statistics, including some of the processes involved in developing and releasing these statistics: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-statistical-summary-policies-and-statements>

More detailed information can be accessed via our [technical](#) and [question and answer](#) documents.