

Freedom of Information request 2014-3129

Date received 9 July 2014

Date of response 2 September 2014

Information request

- 1) Prognosis of “unlikely in longer term” in Work Related Activity

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information request 2014-72 date of response 3 February 2014

(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277230/foi-72-2014.pdf) please could you supply the numbers of people who when assessed for Employment and Support Allowance to date have been specifically placed in the Work Related Activity Group (not the Support Group) with a prognosis where the specific statement is engagement in work is “unlikely in the longer term” (not two years or more).

Please could you supply these numbers in total but also broken down by:

- i. new claimants for Employment and Support Allowance since its introduction
- ii. repeat assessment decisions that have taken place since its introduction; and
- iii. Incapacity Benefit claimant reassessments to ESA that have taken place since migration began in 2010.

- 2) New applicants for ESA - outcomes for five conditions

Pursuant to data last published in September 2012

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/work-capability-assessments--4>) please could you supply the most up to date figures on the total number of applicants for Employment and Support Allowance since its introduction who have the following conditions:

- a) Cystic Fibrosis
- b) Rheumatoid Arthritis
- c) Motor Neurone Disease
- d) Multiple Sclerosis
- e) Parkinson's

who have been placed in the:

- i. Support Group
- ii. Work Related Activity Group
- iii. declared Fit for Work and ineligible for Employment and Support Allowance

3) ESA reassessments - outcomes for five conditions

Please could you supply data on how many people with:

- a) Cystic Fibrosis
 - b) Rheumatoid Arthritis
 - c) Motor Neurone Disease
 - d) Multiple Sclerosis
 - e) Parkinson's
-
- i. placed in the Work Related Activity Group have been reassessed to date; and how many have been found fit for work following that reassessment;
 - ii. placed in the Support Group have been reassessed to date; and how many have been placed in the Work Related Activity Group following that reassessment; and
 - iii. have undergone more than one work capability assessment while in the Work Related Activity Group to date and who have received lower point scores when they were reassessed.

4) Numbers of reassessments – for five conditions

Please could you supply data on how many people with:

- a) Cystic Fibrosis
- b) Rheumatoid Arthritis
- c) Motor Neurone Disease
- d) Multiple Sclerosis
- e) Parkinson's

have undergone multiple work capability assessments since the introduction of Employment and Support Allowance.

5) Audit of clinical evidence sought by Atos Healthcare

Please could you let me know if the Department's audit of Employment and Support Allowance reports from Atos Healthcare include an audit of the clinical evidence sought in concluding individuals with progressive conditions will have recovered to the point where it is likely to be reasonable for them to look for work.

DWP response

Entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) is based on the Work Capability Assessment (WCA). The WCA is a functional assessment of what activities an individual can do. In practice, individuals are assessed by qualified healthcare professionals against a set of qualifying descriptors. As such whilst it is unlikely that individuals with certain degenerative illnesses will recover from their condition, the assessment will take into account their functional abilities at the time of the assessment and where the individual is capable of working or of undertaking some work related activity they could be found fit for work or placed in the work related activity group (WRAG).

If an individual's condition deteriorates or they present another illness they may make another application for ESA and have their eligibility reassessed, either via a new WCA or based on paper evidence; and on this basis they may then be moved into the WRAG or support group (SG).

In response to questions 1-4, the following tables include statistics relating to the ESA WCA and Incapacity Benefits Reassessments (IBR). Each of these can be used in answer to your queries.

Question 1:

Table 1: Number of people who, when assessed for ESA have been placed in the Work-Related Activity Group with the prognosis that work is unlikely "in the longer term" for initial and repeat functional assessments, and Incapacity Benefits Reassessments: October 2008 - September 2013

	Work Related Activity Group
Initial assessments	1,300
Repeat assessments	1,100
Incapacity Benefits Reassessments	2,500
Total	4,900

Question 2:

Table 2: Outcomes of initial functional assessments adjusted to account for the outcome of appeal by disease code: October 2008 – September 2013

	Support Group (SG)	Work Related Activity Group (WRAG)	Fit for Work (FFW)

Cystic Fibrosis	600	100	100
Spinal Muscular Atrophy	900	100	-
Parkinson's Disease	1,100	800	300
Multiple Sclerosis	5,300	3,000	1,100
Other Rheumatoid Arthritis	2,200	3,800	2,700
Total	10,100	7,800	4,200

Questions 3i and 3ii:

Table 3a: Number of people initially placed in the WRAG/SG who have had a first reassessment completed; and of those the number who have been found FFW or placed into the WRAG respectively by disease code: October 2008 – September 2013

	Initial: WRAG, first reassessment completed: All Outcomes)	Of those initial WRAG; first reassessment: FFW	Initial: SG, first reassessment completed: All Outcomes	Of those initial SG; first reassessment: WRAG
Cystic Fibrosis	100	-	200	-
Spinal Muscular Atrophy	-	-	100	-
Parkinson's Disease	400	-	400	-
Multiple Sclerosis	1,800	100	2,100	100
Other Rheumatoid Arthritis	2,000	300	800	100
Total	4,400	400	3,600	200

Question 3iii:

Table 3b: Number of people initially placed in the WRAG, who have received lower points on their first reassessment completed, by disease code: October 2008 – September 2013

	Initial: WRAG, first reassessment: lower points
Cystic Fibrosis	-
Spinal Muscular Atrophy	-
Parkinson's Disease	100
Multiple Sclerosis	300

Other Rheumatoid Arthritis	500
Total	800

Question 4:

Table 4: Number of people who have had at least one reassessment completed, by disease code: October 2008 - September 2013

	Total
Cystic Fibrosis	400
Spinal Muscular Atrophy	200
Parkinson's Disease	1,000
Multiple Sclerosis	5,700
Other Rheumatoid Arthritis	5,100
Total	12,300

Source: Data in the above tables is derived from administrative data held by the DWP and assessment data provided by Atos Healthcare.

Generic Notes:

All figures are rounded to the nearest 100; therefore addition of all volumes for outcomes and statuses may not sum to total cases. “-“ denotes nil or negligible values.

- 1) The period cohorts ESA claims to the calendar month that the claim was first made. There is a reporting lag of approximately 9-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 e.g. September 2013 data is reported in June 2014.
- 2) SG – Support Group, WRAG – Work Related Activity Group, FWW – Fit For Work
- 3) All Outcomes relate to the number of functional assessments where an assessment has been completed and the person has been placed in either the SG or WRAG, or has been deemed FFW.
- 4) For initial and repeat assessments data includes all claims from 27 October 2008 to 30 September 2013.
- 5) For Incapacity Benefits Reassessments data includes all pre-existing IB/SDA/IS claims referred for reassessment from 1 March 2011 until 30 September 2013, including cases in the trial areas which started in October 2010 in the Burnley and Aberdeen areas.
- 6) For Incapacity Benefits Reassessments the outcome is adjusted to account for the outcome of appeal.
- 7) 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.
- 8) Motor neurone disease is shown in the table as 'Spinal muscular atrophy'.
- 9) Tables 3a – 4 give information for a customer's **first** reassessment.

In response to question 5, the audit takes into account whether further medical evidence is requested appropriately and whether the Healthcare Professional (HCP) advice meets the required quality standards taking into account any evidence that was available to the HCP at the time. This applies to all conditions whether they are progressive or not.