



Income-Related Benefits: Estimates of Take-up

Data for financial year 2017/18

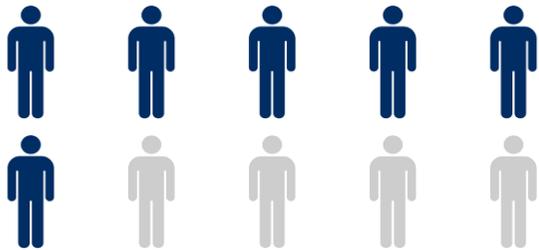
● Annual

Published: 27 February 2020
Great Britain

Official statistics

This report looks at estimates of take-up for income-related benefits. The benefits covered are Pension Credit (PC), Housing Benefit (HB) and Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (IS/ESA (IR)). Take-up refers to the receipt of benefits someone is entitled to and we estimate take-up in two ways, by numbers of people who claim these benefits ('caseload') and by the amount these people claim ('expenditure').

Pension Credit

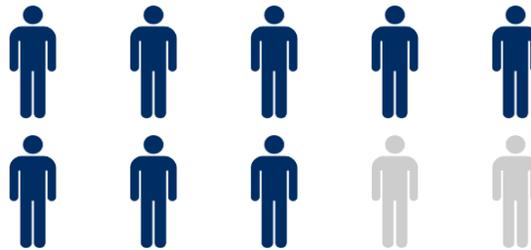


6 out of 10 of those entitled to Pension Credit claimed the benefit



70 per cent of the total amount of Pension Credit that could have been claimed was claimed

Housing Benefit

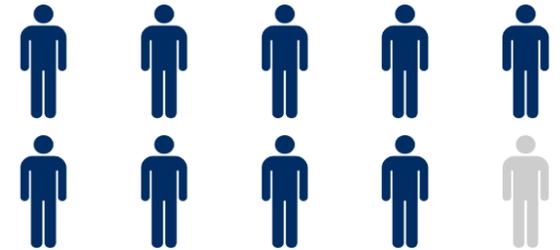


8 out of 10 of those entitled to Housing Benefit claimed the benefit



89 per cent of the total amount of Housing Benefit that could have been claimed was claimed

Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance



9 out of 10 of those entitled to Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance claimed the benefit



92 per cent of the total amount of Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance that could have been claimed was claimed

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Comments? Feedback is welcome

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Introduction

This report provides estimates of the take-up for the following income-related benefits in Great Britain for the financial year 2017/18: Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (combined as it is not possible to distinguish between these eligible cases in our modelling).

Take-up refers to the receipt of benefits someone is entitled to. There are some people who are entitled to benefits but not receiving them. An income related benefit is a benefit where a potential claimant's income is taken into account when deciding whether they are entitled to the benefit. This income can include income from savings or earnings.

Take-up of benefits can be affected by multiple factors. Trying to explain the reasons for non-take-up is difficult and we do not have data in our modelling to do this. Take-up may be affected by broad factors such as the attractiveness of the benefit, lack of awareness of the benefit/application procedure, lack of awareness of entitlement, the perceived stigma of receiving a benefit (Eurofound 2015, see page 11 of this document for the links).

Take-Up statistics are not available at a lower level than Great Britain. This is due to the survey sample sizes for entitled non-recipients being too small to be able to calculate take-up rates in smaller geographical regions.

Methodological refinements have been applied to the data for 2016/17 and 2017/18. Therefore, comparisons to previous years should be treated with caution. See the revisions to the statistics section in the [Background Information and methodology note](#) for more details.

Content of the report

Take-Up is estimated in two ways:



Caseload: Over a one-year period, the average number of benefit recipients who received each benefit compared to the number if everyone entitled to the benefit had claimed it. The caseload figures are rounded to the nearest 10,000 and percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

£ Expenditure: Over a one-year period, the average amount of a benefit claimed multiplied by the total number of people claiming it, compared to the total amount if everyone entitled to the benefit had claimed it. The amounts claimed and unclaimed are rounded to the nearest £10 million and percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point.

Caseload and expenditure take-up rates are estimated using a formula that gives a single, or 'point', estimate together with lower and upper bound estimates. Throughout this report a 'family' refers to either a single adult or a married or cohabiting couple, and any dependent children.

In reporting average annual amounts unclaimed (page 3) we have used mean weekly amounts to be consistent with the estimated total amount unclaimed. Information on median weekly amounts unclaimed is available in the reference tables.

Percentage point differences stated in this publication have been calculated on rounded percentages. Statistically significant differences in this publication are clearly stated. For more information on statistical significance see page 11. This report contains data from 2012/13 through to 2017/18. Data for 2009/10 can be found in the supporting tables.

Further information

A comprehensive set of reference tables breaking down headline results presented in this publication, along with a quick guide on how to use them, is available online here: [Reference Tables and Guide](#). Data from these reference tables are referenced throughout this report.

Estimates of non-take-up for families and expenditure

Pension Credit



Up to 1.2 million families who were entitled to receive Pension Credit did not claim the benefit.



Up to £2.5 billion of available Pension Credit went unclaimed: on average, this amounted to around £2,000 per year for each family entitled to receive Pension Credit who did not claim the benefit.

Housing Benefit



Up to 1.0 million families who were entitled to receive Housing Benefit did not claim the benefit.



Up to £3.1 billion of available Housing Benefit went unclaimed: on average, this amounted to around £2,900 per year for each family entitled to receive Housing Benefit who did not claim the benefit.

IS/ESA(IR)



Up to 0.4 million families who were entitled to receive Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance did not claim the benefit.

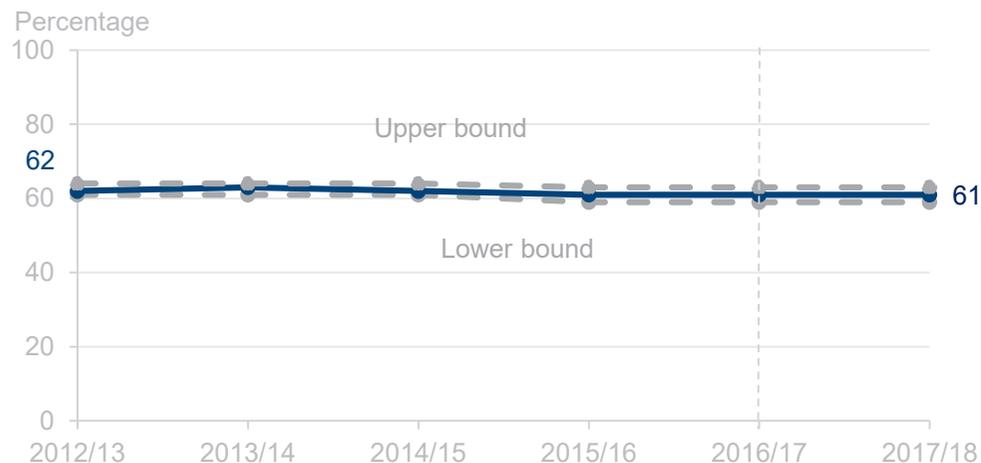


Up to £1.5 billion of available IS/ESA (IR) went unclaimed: on average, this amounted to around £4,100 per year for each family entitled to receive Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance who did not claim the benefit.

Pension Credit

Six out of ten of those entitled to Pension Credit received the benefit

Take-up range (caseload) of Pension Credit, 2012/13 to 2017/18, Great Britain



In 2017/18, an estimated 61 per cent of families who were entitled to Pension Credit received it. The take-up rate in 2017/18 was the same as in 2016/17.

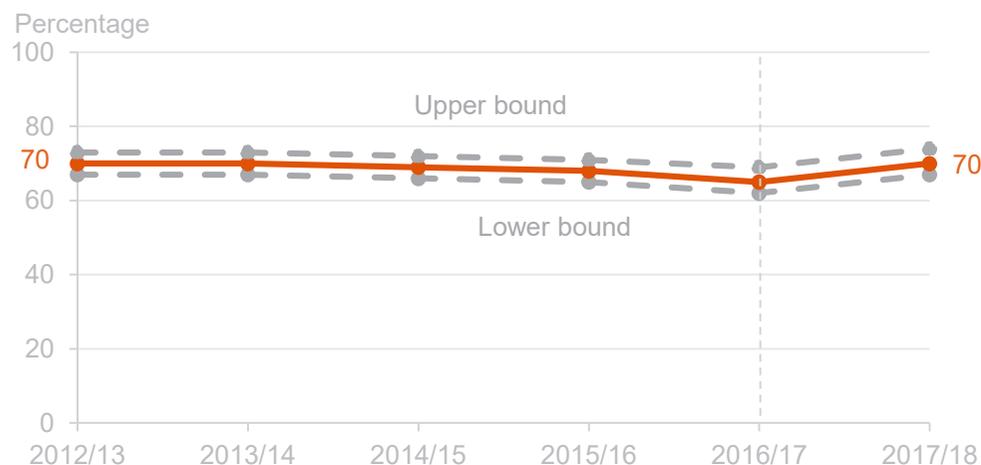
Take-up of Guarantee Credit (68 per cent) continued to be higher than take-up of Savings Credit only (42 per cent). This difference was statistically significant. This could be influenced by the difference in the average weekly amounts people were entitled to. The estimated average weekly amount unclaimed for Guarantee Credit (£59) was substantially higher than Savings Credit only (£7).

Take-up of Pension Credit by those aged under 75 continued to be higher than those aged 75 or over. This has generally been the story across the time period. 62 per cent for those aged under 75 and 61 per cent for those aged 75 or over, in 2017/18.

See **Tables PC1, PC2 and PC9** for full data.

Seventy per cent of the total amount of Pension Credit that could have been claimed was claimed

Take-up range (expenditure) of Pension Credit, 2012/13 to 2017/18, Great Britain



In 2017/18, an estimated 70 per cent of the total amount of Pension Credit that could have been claimed was claimed. This was 5 percentage points higher than in 2016/17. This difference is statistically significant.

As this is higher than the caseload take-up rate this implies those not taking up Pension Credit may only be eligible for much smaller amounts.

Expenditure take-up of Guarantee Credit (71 per cent) continued to be higher than expenditure take-up of Savings Credit only (45 per cent). This difference was statistically significant.

Expenditure take-up of Pension Credit by those aged under 75 (70 per cent) was lower than that of those aged 75 or over (71 per cent).

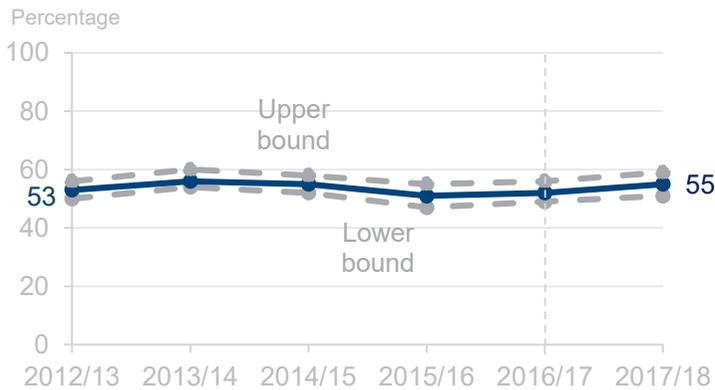
See **Tables PC2 and PC10** for full data.

Pension Credit

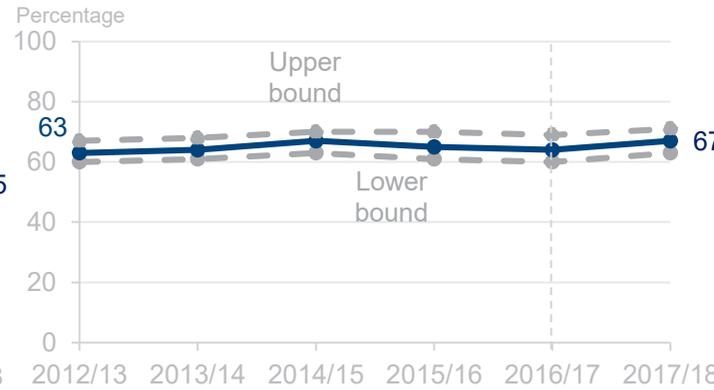
Take-up of Pension Credit was lowest amongst couples: Just over half of those entitled received the benefit

Take-up (caseload) of Pension Credit by family type, 2012/13 to 2017/18, Great Britain

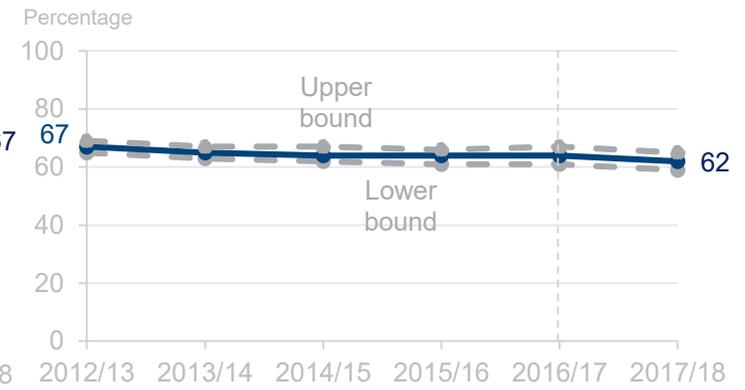
Couples



Single Men



Single Women

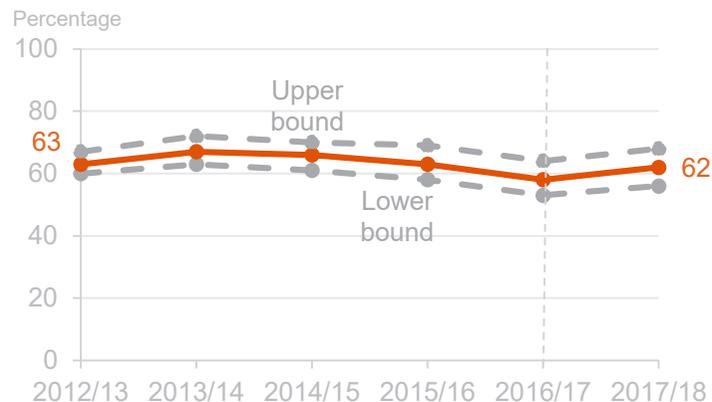


Take-up of Pension Credit by couples (55 per cent) continued to be lower than that of single men (67 per cent) and single women (62 per cent). The difference in the take-up rate of Pension Credit by couples compared to that of single men is statistically significant. See **Table PC3** for full data.

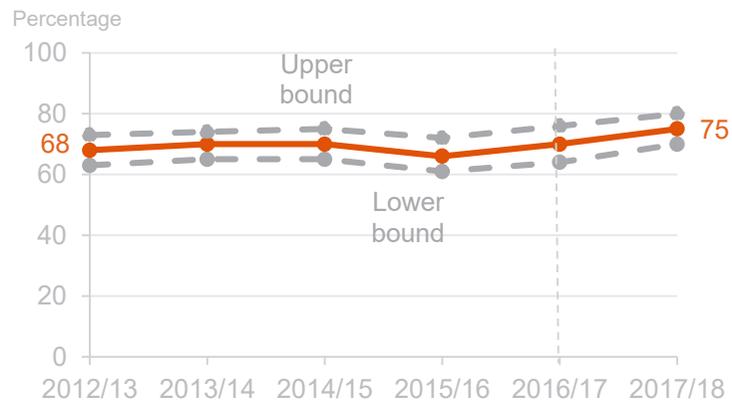
Expenditure take-up of Pension Credit was also lowest amongst couples

Take-up (expenditure) of Pension Credit by family type, 2012/13 to 2017/18, Great Britain

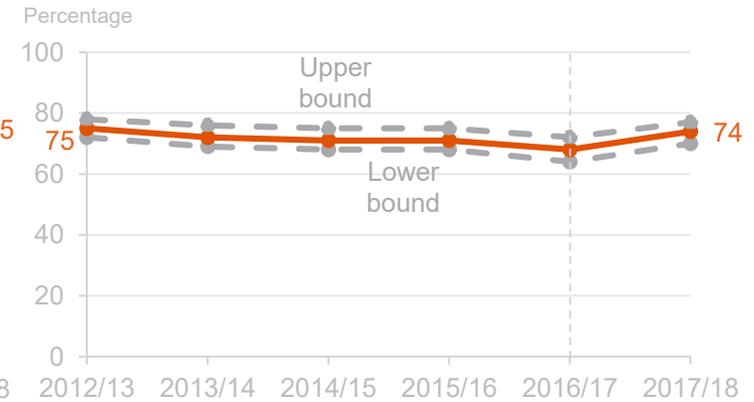
Couples



Single Men



Single Women

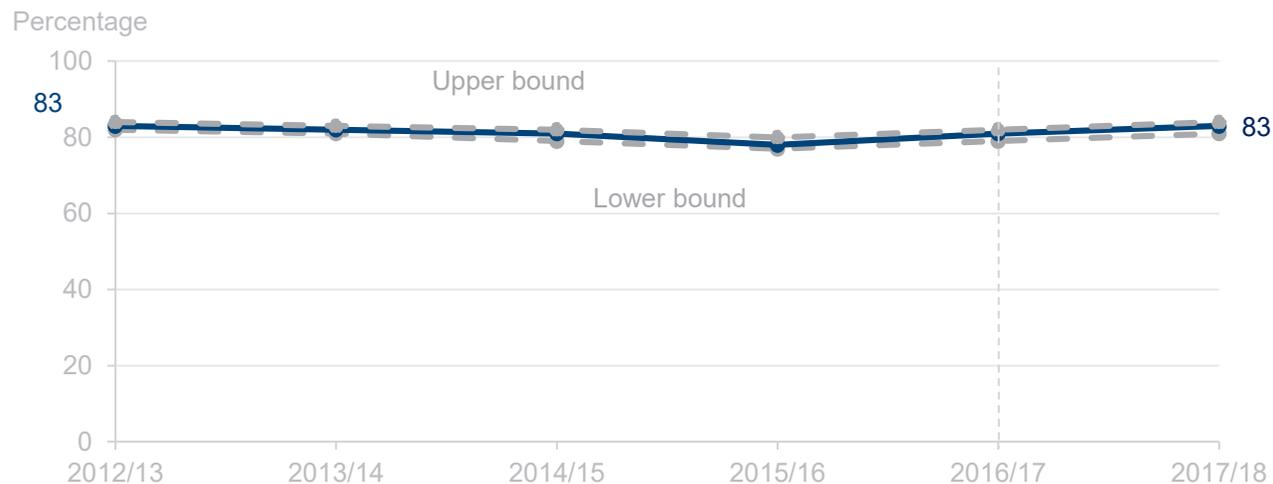


Expenditure take-up of Pension Credit by couples (62 per cent) continued to be lower than that of single men (75 per cent) and single women (74 per cent). Both these differences are statistically significant. See **Table PC4** for full data.

Housing Benefit

Eight out of ten of those entitled to Housing Benefit received the benefit

Take-up range (caseload) of Housing Benefit, 2012/13 to 2017/18, Great Britain

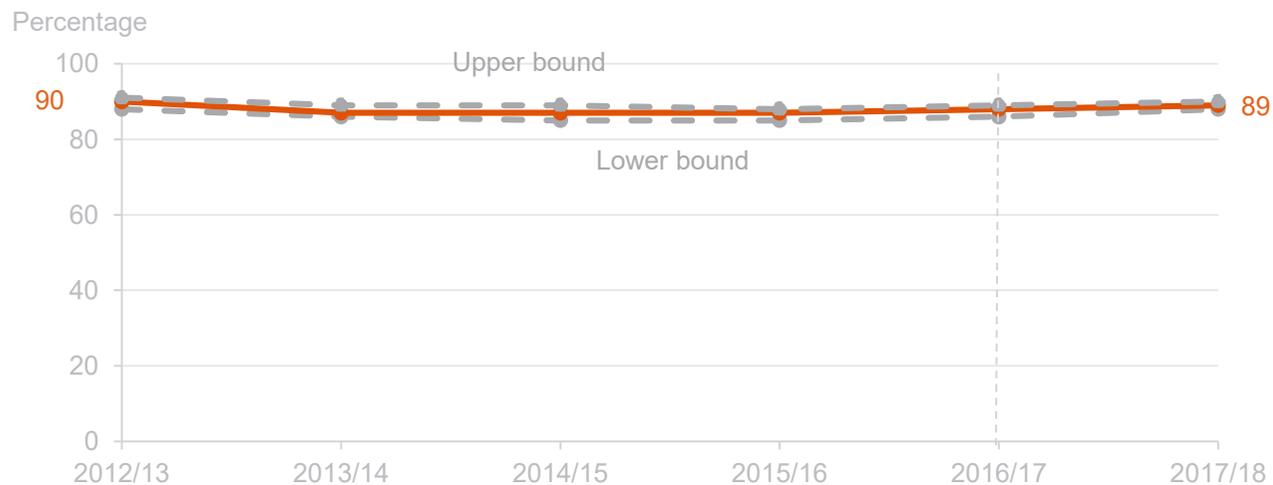


In 2017/18, an estimated 83 per cent of families who were entitled to Housing Benefit claimed it. The take-up rate in 2017/18 was 2 percentage points higher than in 2016/17.

See table **HB1** for full data.

Eighty-nine per cent of the total amount of Housing Benefit that could have been claimed was claimed

Take-up range (expenditure) of Housing Benefit, 2012/13 to 2017/18, Great Britain



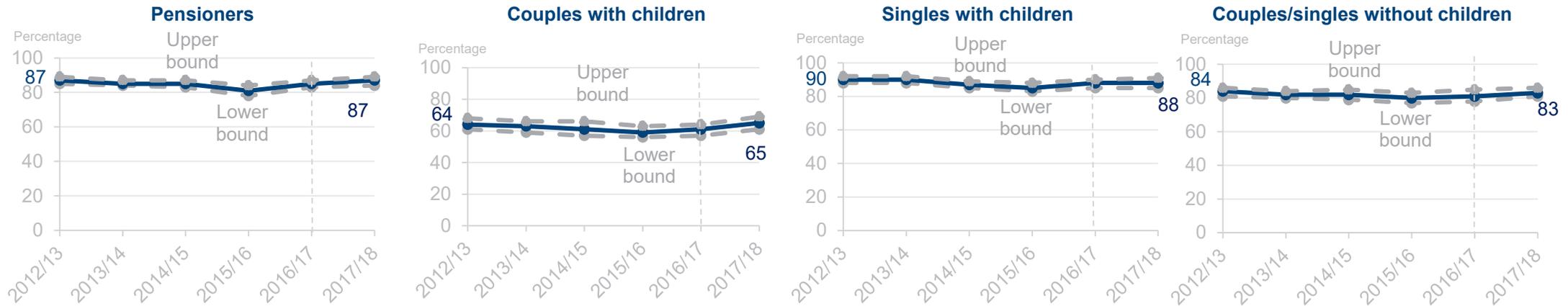
In 2017/18, an estimated 89 per cent of the total amount of Housing Benefit that could have been claimed was claimed. This was 1 percentage point higher than in 2016/17.

See table **HB2** for full data.

Housing Benefit

Take-up of Housing Benefit was highest amongst singles with children: Nine out of ten of those entitled received the benefit

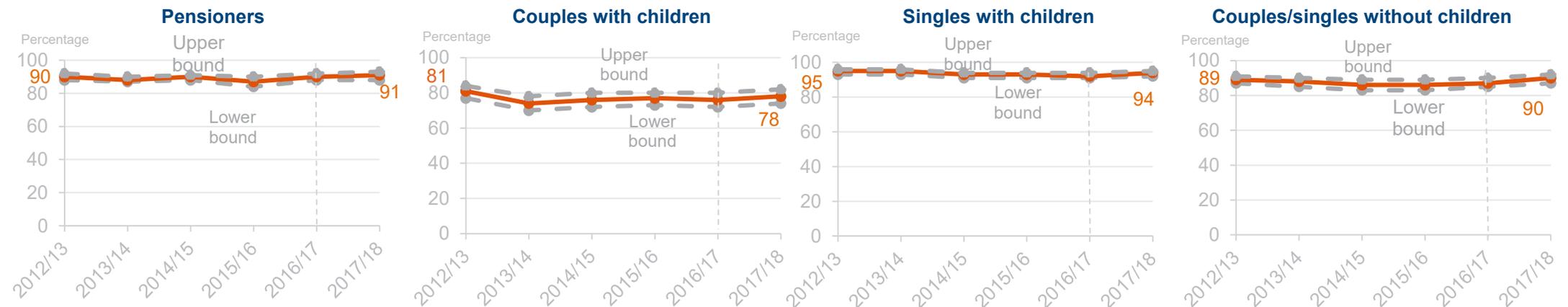
Take-up (caseload) of Housing Benefit by family type, 2012/13 to 2017/18, Great Britain



Take-up of Housing Benefit also varied by family type: singles with children (88 per cent) and couples/singles without children (83 per cent) had higher take-up rates than couples with children (65 per cent). Both these differences are statistically significant. Pensioners had a higher take-up rate (87 per cent) than non-pensioners overall (81 per cent). See **Tables HB1 and HB3** for full data.

Expenditure take-up of Housing Benefit was higher for singles with children than for all other family types

Take-up (expenditure) of Housing Benefit by family type, 2012/13 to 2017/18, Great Britain

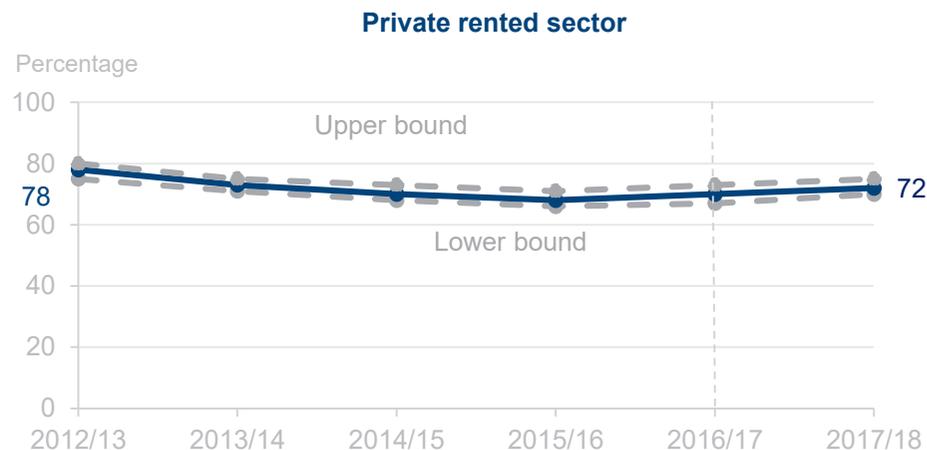
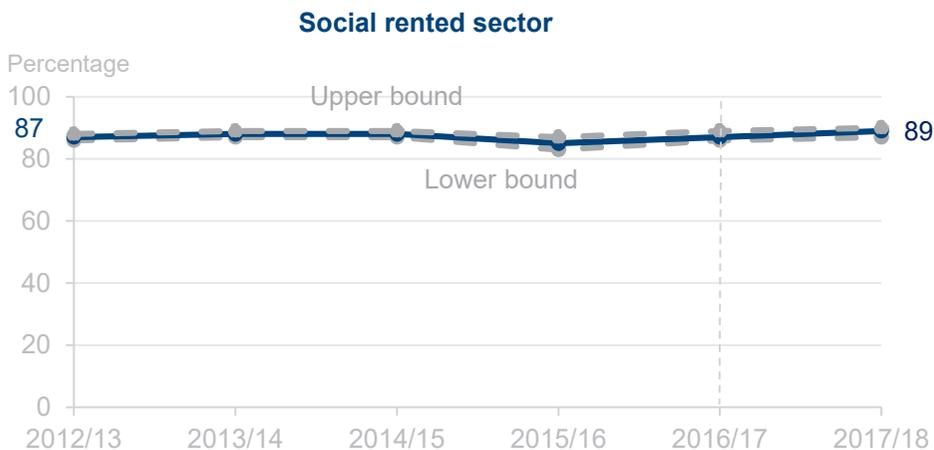


Expenditure take-up of Housing Benefit varied by family type: both singles with children (94 per cent) and couples/singles without children (90 per cent) had a higher expenditure take-up rate than couples with children (78 per cent). These differences are statistically significant. Pensioners had a higher expenditure take-up rate (91 per cent) than non-pensioners overall (89 per cent). See **Tables HB2 and HB4** for full data.

Housing Benefit

Take-up of Housing Benefit was higher in the social rented sector: Nine out of ten of those entitled received the benefit

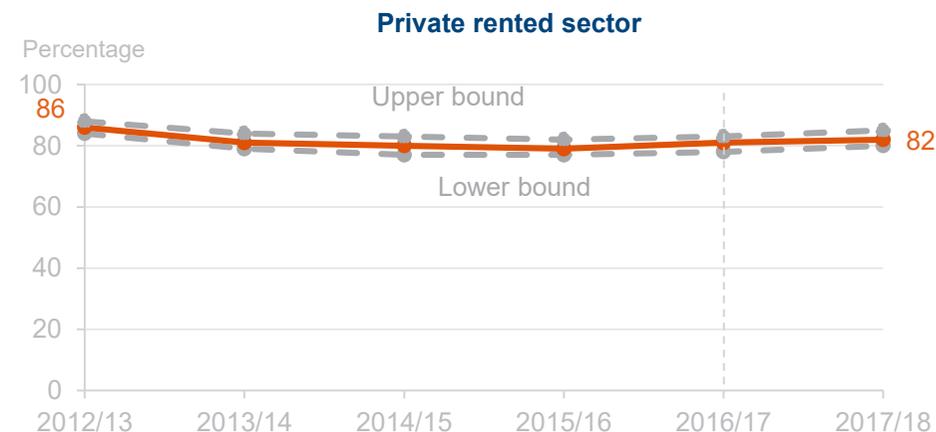
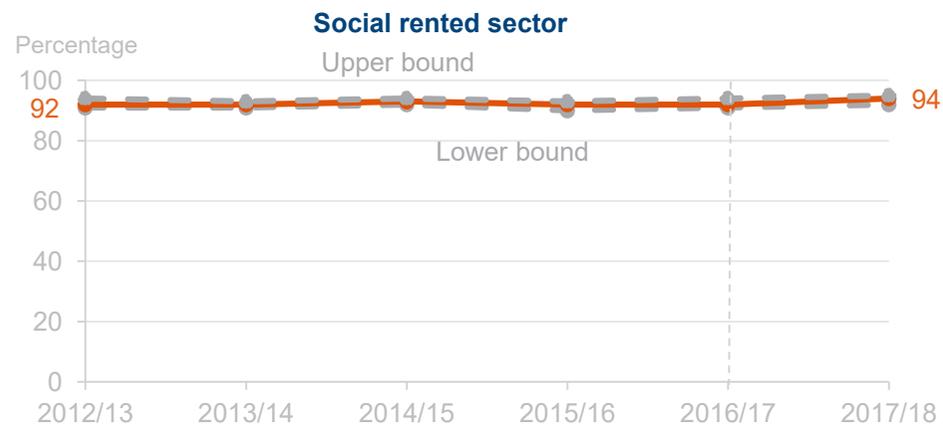
Take-up (caseload) of Housing Benefit by rented sector type, 2012/13 to 2017/18, Great Britain



Take-up of Housing Benefit varied by rental sector. Take-up rates for families in the social rented sector (89 per cent) continued to be higher than take-up rates for families in the private rented sector (72 per cent). This difference was statistically significant. See **Table HB5** for full data.

Expenditure take-up of Housing Benefit was higher in the social rented sector than in the private rented sector

Take-up (expenditure) of Housing Benefit by rented sector type, 2012/13 to 2017/18, Great Britain

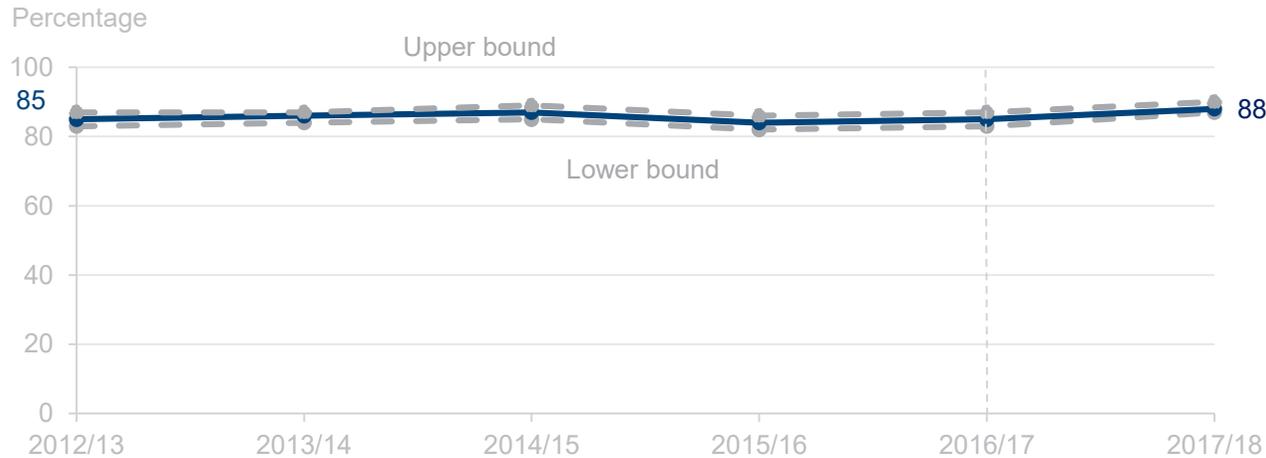


Expenditure take-up of Housing Benefit varied by rental sector. Expenditure take-up rates for families in the social rented sector (94 per cent) continued to be higher than expenditure take-up rates for families in the private rented sector (82 per cent). This difference was statistically significant. See **Table HB6** for full data.

Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

Nine out of ten of those entitled to Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance received the benefit

Take-up range (caseload) of Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, 2012/13 to 2017/18, Great Britain

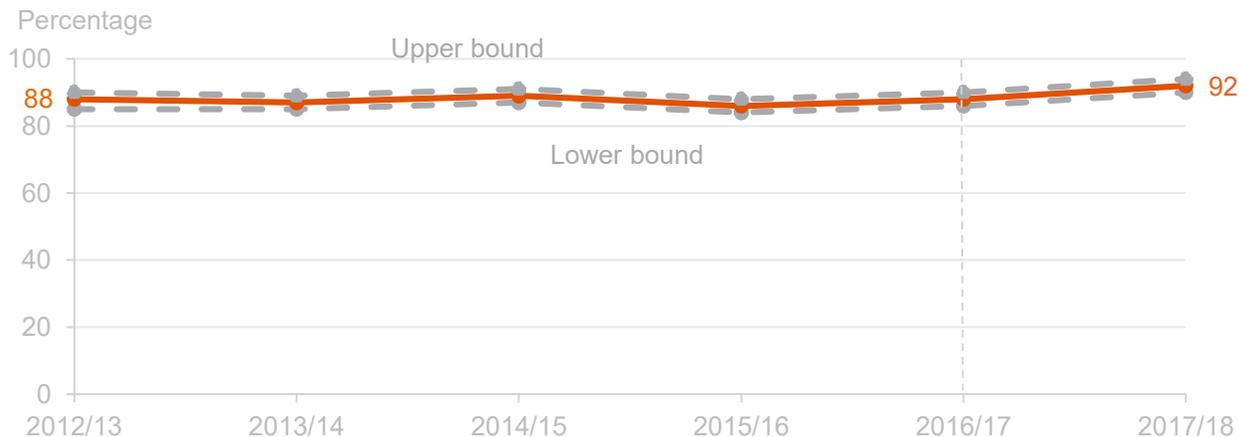


An estimated 88 per cent of families who were entitled to Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance in 2017/18 received the benefit. This was 3 percentage points higher than in 2016/17.

See **Table ISESA1** for full data.

Ninety-two per cent of the total amount of Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance that could have been claimed was claimed

Take-up range (expenditure) of Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, 2012/13 to 2017/18, Great Britain



In 2017/18, an estimated 92 per cent of the total amount of Income Support/Income-related Employment and Support Allowance that could have been claimed was claimed. This was 4 percentage points higher than in 2016/17.

See **Table ISESA2** for full data.

Overview of methodology

The methodology for deriving the estimates of take up is complex. Figures in this report are based on DWP administrative data, Local Authority administrative data and data from the Family Resources Survey (FRS). The survey data from the FRS are then modelled using a static microsimulation model known as the Policy Simulation Model (PSM). The PSM is a model of the tax and benefit system of the UK. The source data for the model comes primarily from the FRS with benefit/tax credit entitlement and tax/National Insurance liability calculated for each FRS family.

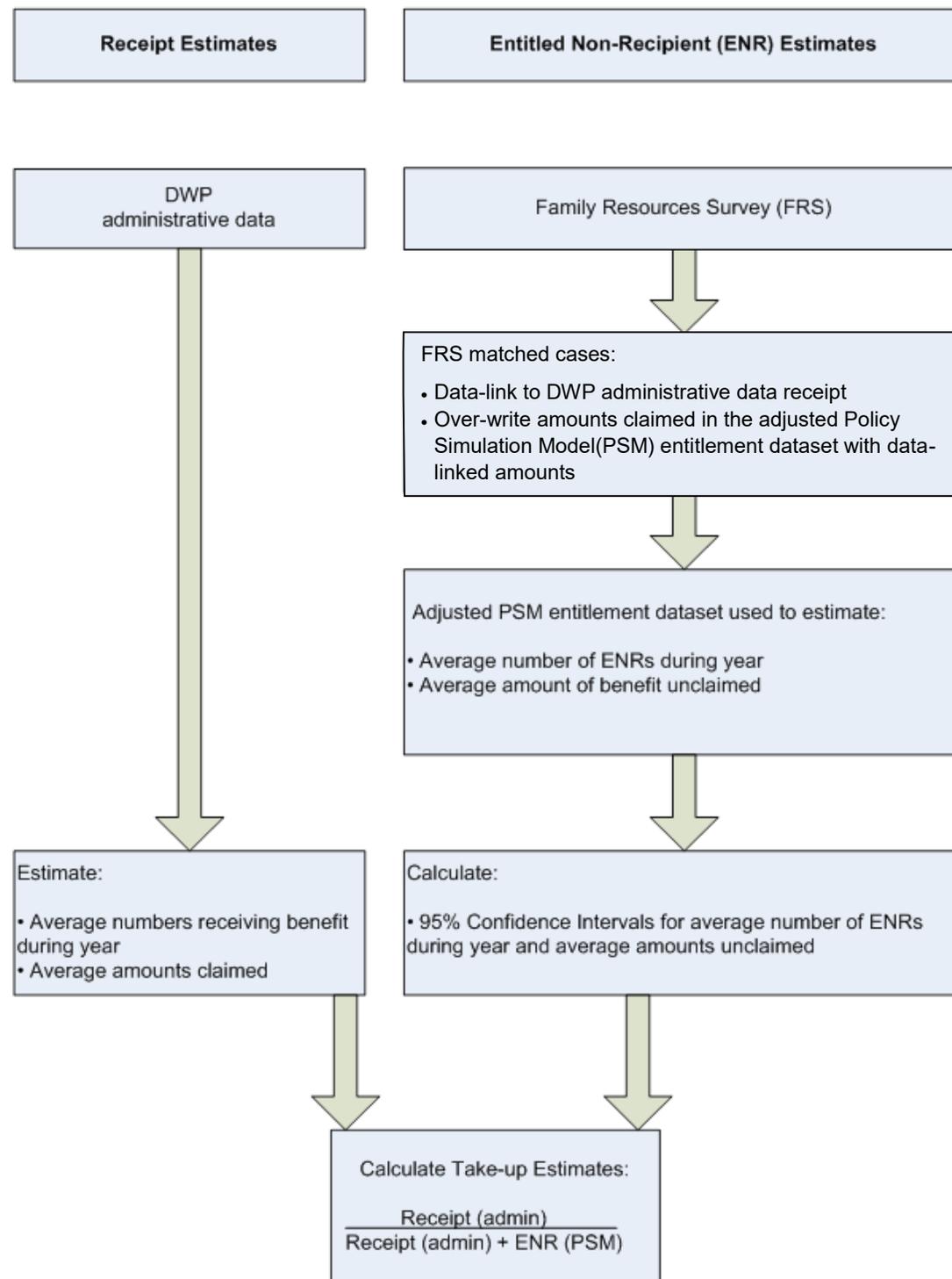
To produce the take-up estimates, information can be taken from DWP administrative data sources to look at the average number of those in receipt of the benefit along with the average amount claimed. However, because administrative benefit entitlement datasets do not exist, survey-based estimates of the population and unclaimed amounts of those who are entitled but not receiving (ENRs) are needed. A combination of an adjusted dataset from the PSM, which includes survey data linked to administrative data, and reported receipt from the FRS are used to produce these estimates.

The estimates for the ENRs are calculated with confidence intervals which provide a lower and upper range for the average number of ENRs and the average amount claimed. These estimates, along with the central estimates are incorporated into the take-up formulae. Caseload and expenditure take-up rates are estimated. A point estimate is calculated. The lower and upper bound estimates of those not in receipt are used to estimate lower and upper take-up bounds. Statistical tests are performed on the point estimates to identify significant differences between the take-up rates between years and between groups.

There are limitations to this methodology but it aims to produce the best take-up estimates based on the evidence available. Specifically, with regards to calculating ESA entitlement, it is not possible to perfectly model ESA eligibility because there are no data available for the PSM to use on the outcomes of individual Work Capability Assessments or doctors' certificates that people would have if they applied to claim ESA.

Take-up of benefits can be affected by a number of factors. Trying to explain the reasons for non-take-up is difficult and we do not have the data in our modelling to do this. For more information on the factors which can affect take-up see the links on page 11 of this document.

See the Background Information and methodology note for more information, available here: [Background Information and methodology note](#).



About these statistics

Official statistics

As an [Official Statistic](#), Income-Related Benefits: Estimates of Take-up is fully compliant with the [Code of Practice for statistics](#).

Where to find out more

Further outputs and reference tables from take-up analysis, alongside our Background Information and methodology note which provides further detail on methodology and recent policy changes which may affect benefit take-up, can be found here: [Background Information and methodology note](#).

The Background Information and methodology note also includes information on issues relating to the take-up of benefits which were reviewed in a paper by Eurofound. This was a working paper which reviewed the literature on issues relating to take-up of benefits. For more information, see the links below: [Eurofound report on access to social benefits reducing non take up](#) and [Eurofound report on access to benefits in times of crisis](#).

DWP statistics on benefit receipt and expenditure can be accessed here: [Stat-Xplore](#) and here: [Benefit Expenditure Tables](#).

Information on entitlement and how to claim a benefit is available at: [Entitlement Information](#).

A guide to the different definitions of earnings and income, with information on alternative sources of data, is available here: [A guide to sources of data on income and earnings](#). More useful information on income and earning statistics can be found here: [Explaining Income and Earnings](#).

Other National and Official statistics

A schedule of DWP's statistical releases over the next 12 months and a list of the most recent releases are available here: [Statistical Release Schedule](#).

In accordance with the code of practice for statistics, DWP statistics are also announced here: [Further DWP statistics](#).

Using the take-up estimates for analysis

Survey data

This publication is based on modelled survey data - it is therefore subject to sampling variation and other forms of error associated with a sample survey. Relative to administrative records the FRS under-reports benefit receipt. See FRS Background Note and methodology for more details: [FRS Background Note and](#)

[methodology](#). The FRS survey data used in the production of take-up statistics is not designed specifically to measure entitlement criteria to the same extent as an application for a specific benefit. It is a multi-purpose household survey.

Sample

Due to the restrictions in modelling and available data, certain populations are excluded from our analysis. The figures presented in this publication and accompanying reference tables only include those living in private households in Great Britain. As a result of the exclusions noted, recipient totals and expenditure estimates in this report may differ from those in other published sources.

Sampling Error

Results from surveys are estimates and not precise figures – in general terms the smaller the sample size, the larger the uncertainty.

Policy Simulation Model

As a model, the PSM is subject to a range of assumptions, beyond that of a typical survey. Of particular importance to take-up statistics are the methodologies for estimating entitlement and specific assumptions for making population estimates from the sample (known as grossing). These are described in more depth in the Background Information and methodology note, available here: [Background and methodology Note](#).

Statistical significance

This is a technical concept that says whether a reported change is likely to have arisen only by chance due to variations in the sampling. We calculate 95 per cent confidence intervals around estimates in take-up which sets a standard that, where any change is reported as statistically significant, there is less than a 1 in 20 chance that the reported difference is due to sampling variation and there is no real underlying change. **Statistically significant differences in this publication are clearly stated.**

Interpretation

Care should be taken when interpreting take-up statistics. For instance, if the upper limit of a caseload take-up range is 90 per cent, this does not mean that at least 10 per cent of the entitled population never take up their entitlement. This is because some of the shortfall in take-up may represent a delay in claiming or processing benefit that is eventually received. The confidence intervals are therefore used to represent the range in which we estimate the overall true rate of take-up, averaged over the whole year, lies.