

Freedom of Information request 2013-126

Received 09th January 2013

Published 26th February 2013

Information request

For each of the following years 2010, 2011 and 2012:

1. How many people in England and Wales were receiving sickness/ESA benefits, at the END of each of the three calendar years. If possible, please provide a geographical breakdown of the number of recipients per region in England and Wales.
2. Please provide a breakdown of the reasons why the recipients get sickness/ESA benefit e.g. how many receive it for mental health problems, how many for obesity problems, how many for drug and alcohol problems etc.
3. For each of these years, what was the government's total sickness/incapacity/ESA benefits bill?

DWP response

In response to questions 1) and 2);

Please see the attached Excel file (FOI 2013-126 Final.xls) which details the number of Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claimants as at 31st December 2009, 2010 and 2011. The information has been presented by primary medical condition and region.

Please note that the figures supplied are derived from unpublished information and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. They should therefore be treated with caution. Also, the medical condition recorded on the claim form does not itself confer entitlement to Incapacity Benefit or Employment Support Allowance.

Statistics on incapacity benefits for the calendar year ending 31st December 2012 is not readily available as the latest available information is at February 2012. To comply with your request in the most helpful way, we have provided information for the calendar year ending 31st December 2009 to give three full years of data.

To qualify for Incapacity Benefit (IB), claimants have to undertake a medical assessment of incapacity for work called a Personal Capability Assessment. Under the ESA regime, new claimants have to undergo the Work Capability assessment. From April 2011 IB recipients have also started to undertake this assessment.

The medical condition recorded on the claim form does not itself confer entitlement to IB or ESA. So, for example, a decision on entitlement for a customer with alcoholism claiming IB or ESA would be based on their ability to carry out the range of activities assessed by the Personal / Work Capability Assessment, or on the effects of any associated mental health problems.

Medical condition is based on evidence provided at the start of the claim and this in itself does not confer entitlement to IB, SDA or ESA and may not represent a claimant's most recent medical condition. It is also important to note that where someone has more than one diagnosis or disabling condition, only the predominant one is currently recorded.

In response to question 3);

The information requested on Benefit Expenditure at the end of each calendar year is not held by the Department.

However statistics on the total amount of benefit expenditure on the benefits listed, for the financial year 2011/2012 and before, are published on the Departments website at:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/index.php?page=expenditure>.

Go to the section headed **Benefit expenditure outturn** and select the table 'Tables showing benefit expenditure by country, region and local authority from 2000/01 to 2011/12'. Select the correct tab at the bottom of the spreadsheet for the time period requested.