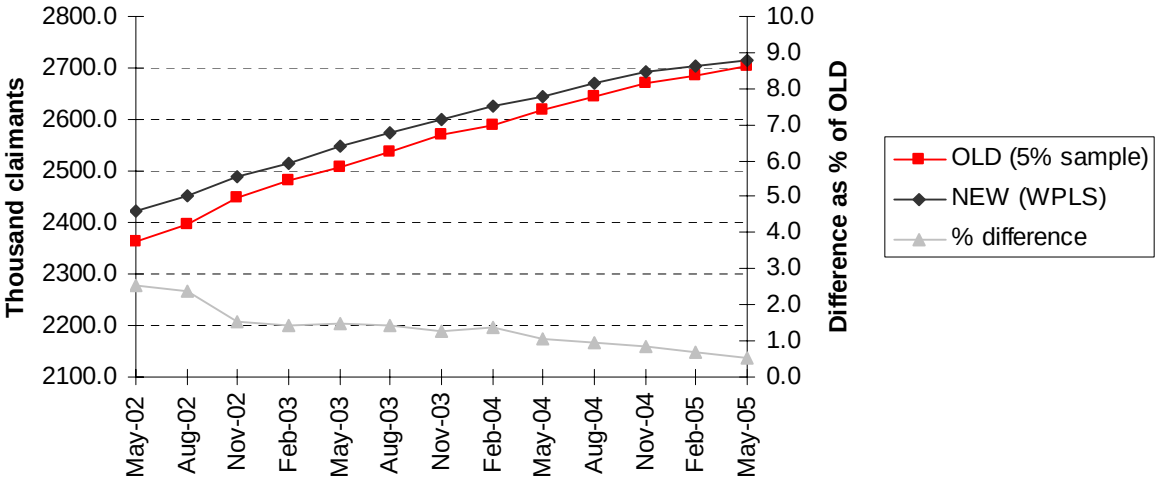
Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) data compared to currently published 5% data

The WPLS data series for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is only available from May 2002 to the present (May 2005). Over this period the WPLS caseload is on average 1.3% greater than that obtained from the 5% sample data, equivalent to 34,000 cases.

DLA: comparison of caseloads, 5% sample and 100% data



Investigation of November 2003 data revealed that the caseload shown by the 100% data was 38,000 greater than the 5% sample data. The main causes of this difference have been identified. (See the glossary below for explanations of Retrospection, late terminations and sampling error.) These are:

1 **Retrospection** accounts for around 50,000 cases at November 2003 which are absent from the 5% sample data. The number of cases added due to retrospection has been falling throughout the period. For example in November 2004, retrospection accounts for around 40,000 cases. The sharp fall in the percentage difference in November 2002 is accounted for by a change in the 5% sample methodology.

2 **Late terminations** At November 2003, the 5% sample data contains approximately 14,500 cases which appear as live, but which in fact have terminated, and are absent from the 100% data. Combining these two elements produces a net difference of 35,500 cases.

The remaining difference is equivalent to 0.1 percent of total caseload. To some extent this will be due to sampling error whereby the caseload identified by the 5% data may be up to 13,700 greater or smaller than the true population value, assuming a 95% confidence interval. (See Glossary for an explanation of sampling error).

There are two relevant definitional differences between the variables in the 100% and 5% datasets. In this document the 5% data have been modified to utilise the same definition used to distinguish between live and suspended cases as the 100% data. As a result approximately 10,000 cases per quarter have been reallocated from ‘suspended’ to ‘live’ cases. There also exists a difference in the definition of claim start date which affects claim duration. Whereas the 100% data calculates the duration as the period since the date when the first award was made, the 5% data shows the duration since the last substantive change to the claim was made, (that is, the date of the latest award) which may be much shorter. Consequently the 100% data show a greater proportion of cases in the lower duration bands compared to the 5% sample data.

Source: Department for Work and Pensions

Glossary

Retrospection arises from the delays which occur in practice between some new claims becoming eligible and their entry onto the computer system. If a case has not been added to the computer system by the time the 5% sample data is extracted (the reference date), it will not be counted (although benefit will be paid). The WPLS, however, incorporates information added to the computer system after the reference date.

The addition of such 'late' information is an important source of difference between the caseloads obtained from 5% sample and WPLS data, and generally results in the WPLS including more cases than the 5% sample data.

Late terminations
Delays can exist between a claim terminating and its removal from the computer system. Such cases will be included in the caseload obtained from the 5% sample data. When information is subsequently received that the claim has ended through claimant death, these cases are removed from the 100% data with respect to a point in time. However, any other form of late termination is not accounted for in the WPLS.

Sampling error
By definition, WPLS data yields the true population value. By contrast statistics published from 5% sample data (obtained by rating up by a factor of 20) are subject to sampling error and are actually estimates of the true population value. By chance, an estimate of the population value, obtained from the 5% sample data, may be slightly lower or slightly higher than the true population value.