

# Employment and Support Allowance – Incapacity Benefits Reassessments: Outcomes of Work Capability Assessments by duration of claim – update

19 June 2013

# Background

From 27 October 2008, existing benefits paid on grounds of incapacity, that is Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) and Income Support (IS) on the grounds of incapacity, were replaced with Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) for new claimants. Between October 2010 and Spring 2014 most claimants who receive IB, SDA and IS paid on the grounds of illness or disability will be assessed to see if they qualify for ESA and to ensure they get the help they need to return to work where appropriate.

- ESA recognises that most disabled people and people with health conditions can and should move towards employment if they are given the appropriate support and encouragement.

On 30 April 2013, the Department published updated information on the outcomes of reassessments of incapacity benefits claimants for ESA in Great Britain. The publication can be found at the following link:

[http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa\\_wca](http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa_wca)

This publication gives further detail on the claims included in the publication mentioned above by breaking down the outcomes by the length of the previous incapacity benefits claim and updates a previous statistical ad hoc publication from November 2012.

# Results

Tables 1 and 2 provide a breakdown of both the *outcomes* of claims where the functional assessment has been completed and the *status* of claims where the functional assessment has not been completed by the length of the previous incapacity benefits claim. The length of the claim is measured as the period between the claim start date and the date the claim was referred for reassessment.

The figures in this publication do not reflect final outcomes, because they do not include the effect of appeals not yet heard. Therefore it is likely that the statistics underestimate the proportion of claimants who will ultimately be awarded ESA.

Table 1 presents the outcomes by duration of the previous incapacity benefits claim and column proportions – i.e. it shows the outcomes by duration as a proportion of all claims with that outcome. For example, Table 1 shows that of all those referred for

incapacity benefits reassessment before the end of August 2012, 16 per cent had been on incapacity benefits for 15 years or more. It also shows that a higher proportion of those assessed to be in the Support Group have a duration of 15 years or more, at 22 per cent.

Table 2 presents the same information but with row proportions – i.e. it shows the outcomes by duration as a proportion of all claims with that duration. For example, Table 2 shows that of all those referred for incapacity benefits reassessment before the end of August 2012, 27 per cent were assessed as Fit for Work. However, this varies by duration of previous incapacity benefits claim; for those with durations of less than 5 years, 33 per cent have been assessed as Fit for Work, whereas for those with a duration of 15 years or more, 19 per cent have been assessed as Fit for Work. There are also variations in the proportions being assessed to be in the Support Group of ESA by duration – with 21 per cent of those with a duration of less than 5 years compared to 37 per cent for those with a duration of 15 years or more.

Overall, these results suggest there is a link between duration of previous incapacity benefits claim and the outcome of incapacity benefits reassessment, with those with the longest durations more likely to be assessed as eligible for ESA. This may be as a result of them having longer term, or multiple health conditions.<sup>1</sup>

The results in this publication are linked to the characteristics of the claimants included and should not be taken as an indication of future outcomes.

[ESA.ANALYSIS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK](mailto:ESA.ANALYSIS@DWP.GSI.GOV.UK)

**Department for Work and Pensions**

**June 2013**

---

<sup>1</sup> This statement should not be interpreted to mean that the above is anything more than a possible reason behind the differences, and there may also be other undetected factors at work.

**Table 1: Outcome of Work Capability Assessments of existing IB claims, adjusted to account for the outcome of appeal, by duration of claim, Great Britain**

Scope: initial functional assessment and appeal – reassessment of existing IB/SDA/IS claims or that following an appeal.

Coverage: Great Britain.

Periods: all statistics are based on claims have been referred for reassessment between October 2010 and August 2012.

Duration of incapacity benefits claim until referral for reassessment	Outcomes of claims where functional assessment has been completed					Status of claims where functional assessment has not been completed			Total caseload
	Entitled to Employment and Support Allowance:			Fit for Work	Any outcome	Closed before assessment	Still in progress	Any status	
	Work Related Activity Group	Support Group	Either group						
Caseload	(a)	(b)	(a+b)	(c)	(a+b+c)	(d)	(e)	(d+e)	(a+b+c+d+e)
Less than 5 years	70,000	39,000	109,100	61,800	170,900	9,400	5,200	14,600	185,500
At least 5 years but less than 10	108,400	75,900	184,300	78,200	262,500	9,300	6,700	16,000	278,400
At least 10 years but less than 15	63,100	46,100	109,200	39,800	149,000	3,800	3,300	7,000	156,000
15 years or more	48,700	45,600	94,300	23,500	117,800	2,200	2,000	4,200	122,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>290,200</b>	<b>206,600</b>	<b>496,800</b>	<b>203,300</b>	<b>700,200</b>	<b>24,700</b>	<b>17,100</b>	<b>41,800</b>	<b>742,000</b>
<i>Proportions (outcomes by duration as a proportion of all claims with that outcome)</i>									
Less than 5 years	24%	19%	22%	30%	24%	38%	30%	35%	25%
At least 5 years but less than 10	37%	37%	37%	38%	37%	38%	39%	38%	38%
At least 10 years but less than 15	22%	22%	22%	20%	21%	15%	19%	17%	21%
15 years or more	17%	22%	19%	12%	17%	9%	12%	10%	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2: Outcome of Work Capability Assessments of existing IB claims, adjusted to account for the outcome of appeal, by duration of claim, Great Britain**

Duration of incapacity benefits claim until referral for reassessment	Outcomes of claims where functional assessment has been completed					Status of claims where functional assessment has not been completed			Total caseload
	Entitled to Employment and Support Allowance:			Fit for Work	Any outcome	Closed before assessment	Still in progress	Any status	
	Work Related Activity Group	Support Group	Either group						
Caseload	(a)	(b)	(a+b)	(c)	(a+b+c)	(d)	(e)	(d+e)	(a+b+c+d+e)
Less than 5 years	70,000	39,000	109,100	61,800	170,900	9,400	5,200	14,600	185,500
At least 5 years but less than 10	108,400	75,900	184,300	78,200	262,500	9,300	6,700	16,000	278,400
At least 10 years but less than 15	63,100	46,100	109,200	39,800	149,000	3,800	3,300	7,000	156,000
15 years or more	48,700	45,600	94,300	23,500	117,800	2,200	2,000	4,200	122,000
Total	290,200	206,600	496,800	203,300	700,200	24,700	17,100	41,800	742,000
Proportions (outcomes by duration as a proportion of all claims in that duration)									
Less than 5 years	38%	21%	59%	33%	92%	5%	3%	8%	100%
At least 5 years but less than 10	39%	27%	66%	28%	94%	3%	2%	6%	100%
At least 10 years but less than 15	40%	30%	70%	26%	95%	2%	2%	5%	100%
15 years or more	40%	37%	77%	19%	97%	2%	2%	3%	100%
Total	39%	28%	67%	27%	94%	3%	2%	6%	100%

Scope: initial functional assessment and appeal – reassessment of existing IB/SDA/IS claims or that following an appeal.

Coverage: Great Britain.

Periods: all statistics are based on claims have been referred for reassessment between October 2010 and August 2012.

**Rounding:**

All values are rounded, cases to the nearest 100, percentages to the nearest full percent. Therefore addition of all volumes for outcomes and statuses may not sum to total cases, and addition of all percentages may not sum to 100 per cent.

**Notes:**

1) This note is a summary. A full explanation is available in the report: Employment and Support Allowance Outcomes of Work Capability Assessments, Great Britain which is published on the Department for Work and Pensions website: [http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/esa\\_wca/esa\\_wca\\_20130430.xls](http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/esa_wca/esa_wca_20130430.xls)

2) Data sources: Raw data used to identify benefit claimants, ESA claims, WCA process outcomes and statuses, and establish appeals results are:

DWP's benefit administration datasets covering new claims (starting from 27 October 2008); and

Atos Healthcare's face to face assessment (ESA85) data, and limited capability for work questionnaire (ESA50) data.

3) Definitions: The data presented in this publication is taken from a dataset which combines the data stated above. Under the counting rules, the units of analysis, used by the department:

a claim is a pre-existing IB, SDA or IS claim going through the reassessment process for ESA from 11 October 2010;

an outcome is where the assessment is completed, meaning in most cases that the limited capability for work questionnaire and face to face assessment has been undertaken;

a status is where the assessment phase is not completed; and

the duration is measured between the claim start date and the date the claim has been referred for reassessment. The date of a claimant's referral for reassessment is primarily based on the review date of their Personal Capability Assessment (PCA); for more details please see the report: Employment and Support Allowance Outcomes of Work Capability Assessments, Great Britain which is published on the Department for Work and Pensions website:

[http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/esa\\_wca/esa\\_wca\\_20130430.xls](http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/esa_wca/esa_wca_20130430.xls)