

**Working Age
Benefits Division**

**EMPLOYMENT AND SUPPORT
ALLOWANCE: WORK CAPABILITY
ASSESSMENT BY HEALTH
CONDITION AND FUNCTIONAL
IMPAIRMENT:
Official Statistics**

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DWP Department for
Work and Pensions

Executive summary

This is the official statistics publication of Work Capability Assessment (WCA) figures relating to the health condition and functional impairment of people claiming Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

It contains figures on ESA claims to November 2009 and WCAs to May 2010 and is intended as a supplement to the quarterly WCA publication (latest release 27th July 2010).

Author(s) contact details

Rob Willis
Working Age Benefits Division
Department for Work and Pensions

Email: Rob.Willis@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 0114 2948244

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Work Capability Assessment by Health Condition and Functional Impairment

1.1 Summary

This publication supplements the quarterly WCA publication (latest release 27 July 2010) relating specifically to information on the health condition of the person making a claim for ESA and the reason Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) or Support Group (SG) status was awarded (where applicable).

In principal, the functional impairment is the reason ESA entitlement is granted after assessment and the health condition is the main health condition recorded at the start of the ESA claim.

Health Condition breakdowns are based on ICD 10 codes (International Classification of Diseases)¹.

¹ <http://www.who.int/classifications/icd/en/>

1.2 Reasons for placement in Support Group

People who are placed in the Support Group after assessment will usually have the reason they have been put in the Support Group recorded which will be either:

- Support Group - Chemotherapy
- Support Group - Physical or Mental Health Risk
- Support Group - Pregnancy Risk
- Support Group - Severe Functional Disability
- Support Group - Terminally Ill

Annex F provides more detail on what these reasons mean.

For some people in the Support Group, the reason is not held. This is usually because the reason was not determined by ATOS recommendation or was a clerical assessment and these are presented as a Support Group – other category. This group includes:

- Clerical assessments - For clerical assessments we can determine Support Group, WRAG or Fit for Work (FfW) Status from the Jobcentre Plus Decision Maker (JCP DM) Decision but no more detail than that;
- Based on JCP DM Decision - In a very small number of cases the JCP DM Decision may differ from the ATOS recommendation and move people from Fit for Work or WRAG to the Support Group;
- After appeal – again, in a small number of cases, people who move to the Support Group from Fit for Work or WRAG after a successful appeal.

Annex A presents the breakdown of people in the Support Group and the reason they have been placed in the Support Group.

Source data is consistent with the WCA Statistics published in July 2010. Some totals may differ slightly due to the inclusion of people in the Support Group after appeal.

1.3 Reasons for Placement in Work Related Activity Group (WRAG)

People are typically assessed as WRAG because they score 15 points or more at the face-to-face WCA. However, the full list of determinants includes:

- **WRAG – 15 points or more at the face-to-face WCA:** applies where someone attends the face-to-face assessment, scores 15 points or more and qualifies for the WRAG;
- **WRAG - clerical assessment:** for clerical assessments we can determine that the result was either: Support Group; WRAG; or, Fit for Work, from the JCP DM Decision but no more detail than that;
- **WRAG – medical reasons:** this combines people who are placed in the WRAG due falling into the Non-Functional Descriptor or the WCA Deferred category (see Annex F for details);
- **WRAG - based on JCP DM Decision:** in a small number of cases the JCP DM final decision may not be the same as the ATOS recommendation and people may, for example, qualify for the WRAG when the ATOS recommendation was fit for work;
- **WRAG - after appeal:** people who move to the WRAG from Fit for Work after a successful appeal. Note that people found fit for work who are in the process of appealing remain in the fit for work category (for the purpose of this breakdown) until their appeal is heard.

Annex B presents the breakdown of people in the WRAG and the reason they have been placed in the WRAG.

Source data is consistent with the WCA Statistics published in July 2010. Some totals may differ due to the inclusion of people in the WRAG after appeal.

1.4 Functional Impairment breakdowns

Functional Impairment information is taken from points scored at the face-to-face work capability assessment. For people scoring 15 points or more at the WCA and who are placed in the WRAG the functional impairment is the basis for entitlement to ESA.

For people placed in the Work Related Activity Group, Annexes D and E provide detail on where people scored points against the different functional descriptors. Annex F provides further information on what activities the functional descriptors relate to.

1.5 Health Condition breakdowns

Medical information is predominantly taken from the information recorded on the medical certificate provided by the GP when someone first makes a claim for ESA. It is based on the primary condition of the person claiming and represents what their GP considers to be the main reason the person cannot work at that time.

In 2010, this information was transferred to central administrative databases for all claims still live in November 2009 and new claims thereafter. For some claims that closed before November 2009 we have used other sources to determine medical condition such as that recorded at the WCA or that recorded by Jobcentre Plus at first contact. However, in some cases the information is missing, particularly for ESA claims that closed before November 2009.

Note that a decision on entitlement to ESA is not normally based on looking at what condition, or conditions, a person has. Instead, the department assesses the functional effects on each individual. So the Work Capability Assessment looks at someone's functional ability to carry out activities which are important for work, like getting around, pick things up, learn new tasks and understand things. For example, an individual will not qualify for ESA on the basis that they have arthritis, but they might qualify because they cannot hold a pen or use a keyboard and mouse.

Annexes C, D and E present figures by health condition and are combined with functional impairment information.

Annex A: Support Group Tables

Table 1: Support Group by reason in Support Group (including effect of appeals) - volumes

Month of Claim Start	Support Group - Chemotherapy	Support Group - Physical or Mental Health Risk	Support Group - Pregnancy Risk	Support Group - Severe Functional Disability	Support Group - Terminally ill	Support Group - other	Support Group - Total
Oct-08	100	200	0	300	100	100	700
Nov-08	500	600	0	1,200	300	400	3,000
Dec-08	500	500	0	1,000	300	300	2,700
Jan-09	600	600	0	1,200	400	400	3,200
Feb-09	500	500	0	1,100	300	300	2,900
Mar-09	600	600	0	1,200	300	300	3,200
Apr-09	600	600	0	1,100	300	300	3,000
May-09	600	600	0	1,200	400	300	3,100
Jun-09	600	600	0	1,300	400	300	3,200
Jul-09	600	700	0	1,500	400	200	3,500
Aug-09	600	600	0	1,200	400	200	3,100
Sep-09	600	700	100	1,500	300	200	3,400
Oct-09	600	600	0	1,100	300	200	2,900
Nov-09	500	700	0	1,100	300	200	2,900
Total	7,300	8,300	600	16,100	4,600	3,800	40,600

Table 1, presents figures for people in the Support Group (SG) using the detailed reasons described in the introduction. The ‘Support Group – other’ category includes people identified as SG from JCP DM data. This will be either because the ATOS recommendation was recorded clerically and we do not know the precise reason for SG status, the ATOS recommendation was Fit for Work or WRAG and changed to SG by the JCP DM or SG status was as a result of a successful appeal. Annex F, gives more detail on SG reasons. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and totals may not sum due to rounding.

Table 2: Support Group by reason in Support Group (including effect of appeals) - percentages

Month of Claim Start	Support Group - Chemotherapy	Support Group - Physical or Mental Health Risk	Support Group - Pregnancy Risk	Support Group - Severe Functional Disability	Support Group - Terminally ill	Support Group - other	Support Group - Total
Oct-08	14%	21%	2%	43%	10%	10%	100%
Nov-08	16%	19%	1%	39%	11%	14%	100%
Dec-08	18%	19%	1%	38%	12%	13%	100%
Jan-09	18%	18%	1%	38%	11%	12%	100%
Feb-09	18%	19%	1%	39%	12%	11%	100%
Mar-09	18%	20%	1%	39%	11%	10%	100%
Apr-09	19%	20%	1%	38%	11%	10%	100%
May-09	19%	21%	1%	38%	13%	9%	100%
Jun-09	18%	21%	1%	40%	11%	9%	100%
Jul-09	17%	21%	1%	43%	11%	7%	100%
Aug-09	19%	19%	1%	41%	12%	8%	100%
Sep-09	17%	21%	2%	45%	9%	7%	100%
Oct-09	19%	22%	2%	37%	12%	8%	100%
Nov-09	17%	25%	2%	38%	12%	7%	100%
Total	18%	20%	1%	40%	11%	9%	100%

Table 2 presents the same figures shown in Table 1 as percentages.

Annex B: Work Related Activity Group Tables

Table 3 - .Work Related Activity Group by reason (including effect of appeals) - volumes

Claim Start Month	WRAG - 15 Points or more at WCA	WRAG - for medical reasons	WRAG - Clerical WCA	WRAG - after appeal	WRAG - based on JCP DM Decision	WRAG - Total
Oct-08	1,000	100	100	500	100	1,700
Nov-08	4,700	400	300	2,600	300	8,200
Dec-08	4,500	400	200	2,300	300	7,700
Jan-09	6,100	500	400	3,100	300	10,500
Feb-09	5,700	400	300	2,800	300	9,600
Mar-09	6,700	500	400	3,100	400	11,000
Apr-09	6,500	500	300	2,600	400	10,300
May-09	6,500	500	300	2,200	300	9,800
Jun-09	7,000	500	300	1,700	300	9,800
Jul-09	7,200	500	300	1,200	200	9,500
Aug-09	6,700	500	300	700	200	8,400
Sep-09	7,200	500	300	400	200	8,700
Oct-09	6,600	500	300	200	200	7,700
Nov-09	6,300	500	200	100	100	7,200
Total	82,800	6,200	4,100	23,500	3,600	120,200

Table 3 presents figures for people in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) using the detailed reasons described in section 1.3. Total WRAG figures are the same as those in Annex C except for the inclusion of people in the WRAG after appeal. The number of people in the WRAG after appeal is likely to increase as more appeals are heard.

Table 4 - .Work Related Activity Group by reason (including effect of appeals) - percentages

Claim Start Month	WRAG - 15 Points or more at WCA	WRAG - for medical reasons	WRAG - Clerical WCA	WRAG - after appeal	WRAG - based on JCP DM Decision	WRAG - Total
Oct-08	58%	5%	3%	31%	4%	100%
Nov-08	57%	5%	4%	31%	4%	100%
Dec-08	58%	5%	3%	30%	4%	100%
Jan-09	58%	5%	4%	30%	3%	100%
Feb-09	59%	5%	3%	29%	3%	100%
Mar-09	61%	4%	3%	28%	3%	100%
Apr-09	63%	5%	3%	25%	4%	100%
May-09	67%	5%	4%	22%	3%	100%
Jun-09	72%	5%	3%	17%	3%	100%
Jul-09	76%	5%	3%	13%	2%	100%
Aug-09	80%	6%	3%	9%	2%	100%
Sep-09	83%	6%	4%	5%	2%	100%
Oct-09	86%	6%	4%	2%	2%	100%
Nov-09	87%	7%	3%	1%	2%	100%
Total	69%	5%	3%	20%	3%	100%

Table 4 presents the same figures shown in Table 3 as percentages.

Annex C: WCA Assessment Result by Health Condition

Table 5 - Result of assessment by ICD10 Condition Group – ESA claims to November 2009 - volumes

ICD10 Condition Group	Support Group	WRAG	Fit for Work	Do not complete assessment	In Progress	Total
Certain Infectious and Parasitic Diseases	700	800	1,900	2,300	300	6,000
Neoplasms	11,100	2,700	3,300	4,400	500	22,000
Diseases of the Blood and Blood forming organs and certain diseases involving the immune mechanism	100	200	500	300	0	1,100
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	400	1,600	3,800	1,900	300	8,000
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	10,400	36,500	105,400	60,100	14,300	226,700
Diseases of the Nervous System	3,200	5,200	6,900	4,300	800	20,300
Diseases of the Eye and Adnexa	100	900	1,300	1,000	100	3,500
Diseases of the Ear and Mastoid Process	100	500	800	600	100	2,100
Diseases of the Circulatory System	2,100	4,900	12,400	6,300	700	26,500
Diseases of the Respiratory System	900	2,100	5,100	2,900	400	11,300
Diseases of the Digestive System	800	1,500	5,800	5,600	400	14,100
Diseases of the Skin and Subcutaneous System	100	600	2,000	1,900	100	4,800
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	1,800	16,800	46,600	24,800	2,400	92,500
Diseases of the Genitourinary System	400	1,100	2,000	1,700	200	5,400
Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Puerperium	300	300	600	1,700	100	3,100
Certain Conditions Originating in the Perinatal Period	0	0	0	0	0	0
Congenital Malformations, Deformations and Chromosomal Abnormalities	500	200	100	100	0	800
Symptoms, Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	3,900	11,100	35,500	34,700	3,500	88,700
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	1,500	8,200	29,600	43,700	1,900	84,800
Factors influencing health status and contact with health services	700	1,000	1,700	1,000	300	4,600
Not Recorded	1,000	600	5,100	53,700	0	60,400
Total	40,100	96,900	270,400	252,800	26,500	686,700

Table 5 shows the health condition recorded against each ESA claim from October 2008 to November 2009 by result of initial assessment. These figures are consistent with the quarterly WCA publication of 27th July and do not include the impact of appeals.

Table 6 - Result of assessment by ICD10 Condition Group – ESA claims to November 2009 – percentages

ICD10 Condition Group	Support Group	WRAG	Fit for Work	Do not complete assessment	In Progress	Total
Certain Infectious and Parasitic Diseases	12%	14%	31%	38%	5%	100%
Neoplasms	50%	12%	15%	20%	2%	100%
Diseases of the Blood and Blood forming organs and certain diseases involving the immune mechanism	9%	18%	46%	23%	4%	100%
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	5%	20%	48%	24%	3%	100%
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	5%	16%	47%	26%	6%	100%
Diseases of the Nervous System	16%	25%	34%	21%	4%	100%
Diseases of the Eye and Adnexa	4%	26%	37%	29%	3%	100%
Diseases of the Ear and Mastoid Process	4%	24%	39%	30%	3%	100%
Diseases of the Circulatory System	8%	19%	47%	24%	3%	100%
Diseases of the Respiratory System	8%	19%	45%	25%	3%	100%
Diseases of the Digestive System	5%	11%	41%	40%	3%	100%
Diseases of the Skin and Subcutaneous System	3%	13%	41%	40%	3%	100%
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	2%	18%	50%	27%	3%	100%
Diseases of the Genitourinary System	8%	20%	37%	32%	3%	100%
Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Puerperium	10%	10%	21%	55%	4%	100%
Certain Conditions Originating in the Perinatal Period	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-
Congenital Malformations, Deformations and Chromosomal Abnormalities	55%	19%	12%	10%	4%	100%
Symptoms, Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	4%	13%	40%	39%	4%	100%
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	2%	10%	35%	51%	2%	100%
Factors influencing health status and contact with health services	16%	21%	36%	21%	6%	100%
Not Recorded	2%	1%	8%	89%	0%	100%
Total	6%	14%	39%	37%	4%	100%

Table 6 presents the same figures shown in Table 5 as percentages.

Annex D: WRAG by Functional Impairment

Table 7 - Points scored by people in the WRAG scoring 15 points or more by functional impairment - percentages

Claim Start Month	Lower Limb	Upper Limb	Sensory	Continance	Consciousness	Understanding and Focus	Adapting to Change	Social Interaction	Total
Oct-08	48%	11%	8%	4%	7%	31%	38%	23%	170%
Nov-08	50%	11%	8%	5%	7%	31%	39%	21%	172%
Dec-08	53%	11%	8%	4%	6%	29%	37%	20%	168%
Jan-09	51%	11%	7%	5%	7%	30%	39%	21%	171%
Feb-09	50%	9%	8%	5%	6%	31%	39%	22%	170%
Mar-09	48%	9%	7%	4%	6%	32%	41%	23%	172%
Apr-09	50%	9%	7%	5%	7%	31%	39%	21%	169%
May-09	50%	9%	7%	4%	6%	32%	40%	23%	171%
Jun-09	50%	10%	7%	4%	6%	32%	41%	22%	171%
Jul-09	48%	10%	7%	4%	6%	33%	41%	23%	172%
Aug-09	50%	10%	7%	4%	6%	31%	40%	21%	170%
Sep-09	49%	10%	7%	4%	6%	32%	41%	23%	172%
Oct-09	50%	10%	7%	4%	6%	31%	39%	22%	170%
Nov-09	50%	9%	7%	4%	5%	32%	40%	22%	168%
Total	50%	10%	7%	4%	6%	31%	40%	22%	171%

Table 7 above shows people in the WRAG who scored 15 points at the WCA and in which functional impairment category they scored points. For example 6% of people who started their ESA claim in November 2008 scored points in an activity relating to their upper limbs.

Note that percentages add up to more than 100% as people often score points in more than one category.

Annex G provides further detail on the functional impairment groups presented in table 7.

Annex E: WRAG by Functional Impairment and Medical Condition

Table 8 - People who score 15 points or more at the WCA by points scored at the WCA and medical condition – percentages

	Lower Limb	Upper Limb	Sensory	Continenence	Consciousness	Understanding and Focus	Adapting to Change	Social Interaction	Total claims in WRAG with 15 points or more
ICD10 Condition Group									
Certain Infectious and Parasitic Diseases	42%	7%	8%	16%	5%	39%	42%	27%	185%
Neoplasms	70%	15%	17%	13%	8%	19%	16%	6%	165%
Diseases of the Blood and Blood forming organs and certain diseases involving the immune mechanism	73%	11%	6%	6%	10%	21%	22%	10%	159%
Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases	67%	11%	17%	6%	22%	15%	15%	8%	160%
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	12%	2%	3%	3%	3%	57%	78%	44%	202%
Diseases of the Nervous System	52%	16%	9%	7%	38%	24%	17%	8%	172%
Diseases of the Eye and Adnexa	14%	3%	92%	1%	4%	6%	7%	3%	130%
Diseases of the Ear and Mastoid Process	23%	3%	81%	2%	3%	9%	13%	6%	140%
Diseases of the Circulatory System	81%	19%	15%	3%	7%	18%	14%	7%	163%
Diseases of the Respiratory System	87%	7%	7%	5%	5%	13%	14%	6%	143%
Diseases of the Digestive System	57%	6%	5%	33%	5%	21%	24%	12%	163%
Diseases of the Skin and Subcutaneous System	81%	20%	5%	5%	3%	12%	16%	10%	150%
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system and Connective Tissue	93%	18%	5%	4%	1%	7%	8%	4%	140%
Diseases of the Genitourinary System	73%	7%	9%	17%	6%	14%	18%	10%	155%
Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Puerperium	48%	5%	1%	3%	6%	36%	48%	18%	166%
Certain Conditions Originating in the Perinatal Period	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Congenital Malformations, Deformations and Chromosomal Abnormalities	49%	2%	29%	13%	3%	50%	33%	10%	188%
Symptoms, Signs and Abnormal Clinical and Laboratory findings, not elsewhere classified	63%	12%	9%	5%	8%	23%	25%	15%	159%
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	80%	14%	5%	3%	3%	11%	12%	7%	135%
Factors influencing health status and contact with health services	71%	13%	7%	4%	10%	15%	16%	8%	145%
Not Recorded	69%	9%	5%	7%	7%	16%	22%	7%	141%
Total	50%	10%	7%	4%	6%	31%	40%	22%	171%

Table 8 shows people who made an ESA claim between October 2008 and November 2009 and were then placed in the WRAG after scoring 15 points or more at the WCA by health condition and functional impairment. For example, of people with a Mental and Behavioural Disorder, 78% scored points in 'Adapting to Change' related impairments.

Annex F: Sub-Categories - Further Information

Below is a more detailed explanation of the Support Group breakdown, the functional impairment breakdown, the non-functional descriptor and WCA deferred categories.

Support Group

In most cases the reason for being placed in the Support Group is recorded at assessment. The following provides a more detailed description of the breakdowns in Table 1 and Table 2:

- **Chemotherapy** – people receiving certain types of chemotherapy automatically qualify for the support group;
- **Physical or Mental Health Risk** – the regulations (see link below) allow that in ‘exceptional circumstances’ a person may be entitled to ESA and put into the support group if there would be ‘serious risk to the mental or physical health of any person’ if the claimant were to be found ‘fit for work’;
- **Pregnancy Risk** – if a woman is pregnant and there is serious risk to her health or the health of her unborn child if she works;
- **Severe functional disability** – if the claimant meets the functional criteria, covering physical and mental capacity, laid out in the legislation (see link below);
- **Terminally ill** – someone diagnosed as terminally ill with a prognosis of 6 months or less.

The link below is to The Employment and Support Allowance Regulations 2008 which give further detail on the circumstances in which someone qualifies for the Support Group:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi_20080794_en_1

Functional Impairment

Below is a more detailed description of the functional impairment categories in which people will score points if they score 15 points or more and qualify for the WRAG. They are split between Physical and Mental, cognitive and intellectual functions:

Physical Functions

- **Lower limb** – physical functions such as ability to walk, stand, sit and bend.
- **Upper Limb** – physical functions such as ability to reach, pick up and manual dexterity.
- **Sensory** – functions such as speech, hearing and vision.
- **Continence** – functions relating to control over the bladder and bowel.
- **Consciousness** – functions relating to involuntary loss of consciousness.

Mental, cognitive and intellectual functions

- **Understanding and focus** – ability to learn and comprehend, hazard awareness, memory and concentration, and initiating and executing tasks. For example, this descriptor might include someone with a learning disability or someone with dementia.
- **Adapting to change** – ability to cope with changes to routine, to get about and to cope with social situations. These are the sort of challenges someone with autism might face.
- **Social Interaction** – ability to deal with other people. These are the sort of challenges someone with a psychotic condition might face.

The link below provides further information on the Work Capability Assessment and includes a document explaining the functional impairments in further detail:
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/esa/DG_172012

Non-Functional Descriptors

Customers will be treated as having limited capability for work and placed in the WRAG if they are:

- suffering from a life-threatening disease in relation to which:
 - there is medical evidence that the disease is uncontrollable, or uncontrolled, by a recognised therapeutic procedure, and
 - in the case of a disease that is uncontrolled, there is a reasonable cause for it not to be controlled by a recognised therapeutic procedure;
- suffering from some specific disease or bodily or mental disablement and, by reasons of such disease or disablement, there would be a substantial risk to the mental or physical health of any person if they were found not to have limited capability for work.

WCA Deferred

Customers will be treated as having limited capability for work and placed in the WRAG if they are:

- An in-patient in a hospital or similar institution undergoing medical or other treatment ;
- Recovering from treatment as an in-patient;
- Pregnant where there is harm to the mother and/or child;
- During a period of confinement for pregnancy;
- Pregnant and in receipt of Maternity Allowance with an ESA top-up;
- Undergoing regular treatment - this means a customer receiving:
 - regular weekly treatment by way of haemodialysis for chronic renal failure;
 - treatment by way of plasmapheresis or by way of radiotherapy;

- regular weekly treatment by way of total parenteral nutrition for gross impairment of enteric function;
- receiving treatment by way of intravenous, intraperitoneal or intrathecal chemotherapy; or
- recovering from intravenous, intraperitoneal or intrathecal chemotherapy treatment.

The link below is to The Employment and Support Allowance Regulations 2008. Part 5 gives a full description of how people can qualify for the Work Related Activity Group:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/uksi_20080794_en_1

Annex G: Technical Note

Source Data

The data presented in this publication combines two main data sources:

- benefit claims data held by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) covering new ESA claims that started between October 2008 to November 2009; and
- functional assessment data sourced from ATOS Healthcare covering assessments completed up to May 2010.