



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Evidence Use and Duration on Benefit for DLA claimants aged 16-64, 2012/13

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Background

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a benefit that provides a cash contribution towards the extra costs of needs arising from an impairment or health condition. DLA is a non-means-tested benefit payable regardless of employment status. It is part of a wider range of support and services available to disabled people, including support with housing and Council Tax costs, and in the form of services or direct payments from Local Authorities to meet social care needs¹.

Although it is intended to contribute towards extra costs, measuring each individual's expenditure would be administratively complex and expensive. Entitlement and award levels are, therefore, based on proxies – care and mobility – as research at the time of DLA's introduction showed that they were the greatest sources of extra costs². The decision about whether to award benefit is not made on the basis of an individual's costs, but on the severity of their care and mobility needs.

To apply for DLA, individuals complete a claim form which requests detailed information about the impact of their impairment or health condition on their ability to manage their care themselves and/or get around. If a claimant has a progressive disease and is not expected to live for more than another six months, there are Special Rules for claiming the benefit to make sure it is processed more quickly and easily.

The claim form is considered by a Decision Maker who either awards or turns down the claim. Awards are currently payable at two mobility and three care rates leading to a possible 11 different combinations of payable rates of benefit. Awards can be made for any duration, including indefinitely. Awards are reviewed if an individual reports a change, but there is currently no process to systematically review all awards.

The Department publishes a range of National Statistics on DLA recipients at <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=tabtool>.

This publication presents additional Pension, Disability and Carers Service (PDCS) management information on evidence use in DLA new claim decisions, and data from the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study on the duration in receipt of DLA for claimants on the February 2013 caseload.

¹ For claimants aged 16-64 on 8th April 2013 DLA will be replaced by Personal Independence Payment, the timetable for its introduction can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/timetable-for-introducing-personal-independence-payment-and-estimates-of-projected-caseloads-policy-briefing-note>

² Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, *The financial circumstances of disabled adults living in private households*, 1988.

Method

Table 1: Main Source of Evidence Used in DLA New Claim Decisions, 2012/13

This analysis presents a breakdown of DLA new claim decisions made between April 2012 and March 2013 according to the evidence which the Decision Maker considered was the main source which led to their decision. These figures are for DLA claimants aged 16-64.

When a new claim decision is made for DLA, the PDCS Decision Maker will consider whether the decision can be made based on the claim form and evidence submitted by the claimant. The claim form asks for information on the claimant's illness or disability and asks the claimant to provide copies of prescriptions, details of treatments and hospital or other reports if these are available.

If the Decision Maker requires additional evidence he/she may contact the claimant or their carer or the claimant's GP, may request that the claimant attends a face to face appointment, or may contact a relevant third party for more information.

More than one piece of evidence can be used in making a DLA decision. For each claim, the Decision Maker records the type of evidence which they considered to be the main source which led to the decision. The main source of evidence used for new claim decisions in 2012/13 is reported in Table 1.

These figures are from Management Information collected by the Pension, Disability and Carers Service (PDCS). This data is not quality assured to the same extent as Official Statistics therefore figures should be treated as estimates.

Table 2: Average Monetary Award Value and Total DLA Payments for Successful New Claims, 2012/13.

Table 2 shows the average value of DLA awards, according to the main source of evidence used. These figures are for claimants aged 16-64 who were newly awarded DLA during 2012/13.

We have also included an estimate of the total DLA payments made to these claimants during 2012/13. The expenditure figures are a multiplication of the average award value, the number of people who were awarded this amount, and the average duration that these people spent on benefit during 2012/13 which is 26 weeks.

There is not a causal relationship between evidence and award value, in other words obtaining further evidence does not directly lead to a higher award. The claims for which further evidence is required are different from those where it is not required. For example, a report from a medical professional is always required in Special Rules cases for claimants with limited life expectancy, and these cases are automatically awarded Higher Rate Care.

These figures are from Management Information collected by the Pension, Disability and Carers Service (PDCS). This data is not quality assured to the same extent as Official Statistics therefore figures should be treated as estimates.

Table 3: Duration in receipt of DLA for claimants aged 16-64 on the February 2013 caseload.

Table 3 shows a breakdown of DLA recipients aged 16-64 in February 2013, according to how long these claimants have been in receipt of DLA.

These figures are from Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study data which records the start date of each individual's DLA award.

Results

Table 1: Main Source of Evidence Used in DLA New Claim Decisions, 2012/13

	Claim Form	General Practitioner Report	Medical Examination Report	Other Source of Evidence
Percentage of New Claim Decisions, 2012/13	10%	40%	6%	45%

Source: PDCS Management Information

Notes:

1. These figures show data for DLA new claimants aged 16-64 for the period April 2012 to March 2013, in Great Britain.
2. More than one piece of further evidence can be used to make the DLA decision. This table indicates the evidence which the DWP Decision Maker considered to be the main source used to make the decision.
3. Other Sources of Evidence include phone calls to the claimant or their Carer, the claimant's Personal Care Support Plan, information from a Social Worker, or from an Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist or other Allied Health Professional, a Hospital report or information obtained as part of the claimant's application for Employment and Support Allowance.
4. Claims made under the Special Rules are included in the General Practitioner Report column.
5. Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 2: Average Monetary Award Value and Total DLA Payments for Successful New Claims, 2012/13

	Average Award for Successful Claimants in 2012/13	Total Payment to These Claimants During 2012/13
DLA Award Made Using Claim Form	£64.00 / week	£10m
DLA Award Made Using a GP Report	£91.80 / week	£140m
DLA Award Made Using a Medical Examination Report	£67.00 / week	£10m
DLA Award Made Using Other Sources of Evidence	£67.60 / week	£100m
All New DLA Awards in 2012/13	£78.60 / week	£250m

Source: PDCS Management Information

Notes:

1. These figures show data for DLA new claimants aged 16-64 for the period April 2012 to March 2013, in Great Britain.
2. Weekly expenditure figures have been rounded to the nearest ten pence and expenditure figures to the nearest £10million.
3. The Total Payment column shows an estimate of the total DLA payments made during the year 2012/13 to those claimants who were newly awarded DLA in 2012/13.
4. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Table 3: Duration in receipt of DLA for claimants aged 16-64 on the February 2013 caseload

	Caseload (millions)	Percentage
Awarded DLA over 15 years ago	0.6	28%
Awarded DLA 10-15 years ago	0.4	18%
Awarded DLA less than 10 years ago	1.1	54%
Total DLA Caseload	2.0	100%

Source: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, February 2013

Notes:

1. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

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