

Freedom of Information request 20/2011

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Information request

Number of incapacity benefit/severe disability allowance (IB/SDA) claimants who were recorded as claiming benefit because of "Reaction to Severe Stress" every year since 2008 to the present date.

For the latest figures for the number of "Reaction to Severe Stress" claimants please provide me with a list showing each local authority how many such claimants come from that local authority and what percentage of the working age population in that LA those claimants account for?

DWP response

Please note that Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) replaced Incapacity Benefit for new claims from October 2008.

To qualify for Incapacity Benefit (IB), claimants have to undertake an assessment of incapacity for work called a Personal Capability Assessment. Under the Employment Support Allowance regime, new claimants have to undergo the Work Capability assessment. From April 2011 Incapacity Benefit recipients will begin also to undertake this assessment. The medical condition recorded on the claim form does not itself confer entitlement to Incapacity Benefit or Employment Support Allowance. So, for example, a decision on entitlement for a customer claiming Incapacity Benefit on the basis of reaction to severe stress 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. We have therefore presented information below on how the majority of people, with reaction to severe stress, and adjustment disorders and placed in the Work Related Activity Group, qualified for entitlement. This information relates to ESA claims only as we do not hold the equivalent information for IB claims.

For people with reaction to severe stress, and adjustment disorders around two thirds of the Work Related Activity Group qualified after scoring 15 points or more at the Work Capability Assessment. The top three functional impairment activities are as follows:

- 74% scored in activities relating to adapting to change

- 49% in activities relating to understanding and focus
- 38% in activities relating to social interaction

Please note that people can score points in more than one activity group so figures will not sum to 100%. Figures are consistent with the October 2010 WCA publication, available at the link below. The publication also explains reasons for placement in the WRAG and point scoring across the whole range of functional activities assessed by the WCA. It is also important to note that where someone has more than one diagnosis or disabling condition, only the predominant one is currently recorded.

You can access official statistics on the Employment Support Allowance Work Capability Assessment by health condition and function on the Department's website at:

http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/esa_wca/index.php?page=esa_wca_arc

In response to the first part of your enquiry, the available figures are shown in the table below. Figures for ESA by medical condition are not available at 2008 or 2009.

Number of IB/SDA and ESA Claimants with a recorded medical condition of Reaction to Severe Stress, May 2008 to May 2010

	IB/SDA Reaction to Severe Stress	ESA Reaction to Severe Stress
May 2008	53,240	-
May 2009	43,220	-
May 2010	36,860	14,640

Source: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent data

Note:

- 1) Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
- 2) Figures include credit only cases.

In response to the second part of your enquiry, the attached table shows IB/SDA and ESA claimants with a recorded medical condition of Reaction to Severe Stress, by Local Authority at May 2010.

Section 21 of the Act allows us to direct you to information which is already reasonably accessible to you.

The Office of National Statistics publishes population estimates on the **Nomis** website at <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/Default.asp> . You can use this information to calculate population estimates for your request.

You may also find it useful to view published National Statistics on Employment Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefits/Severe Disablement

Allowance claimants on the DWP website via the Tabulation Tool at:
<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=tabtool> The Tabulation Tool
allows you to construct tables to your own requirements, including Local
Authority.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me quoting the
reference number above.