

Freedom of Information request 1174/2011

Received 26 April 2011

Published 4 July 2011

Information request

1. As at the most recent date that you hold records for please supply details of the numbers of claimants of incapacity benefit/severe disablement allowance where the claimants are not registered as living in the United Kingdom? What is the estimated value of claims from these non-UK claimants?
2. Please supply details showing the country of residence for these claimants where there are ten or more people in that country claiming the benefit and the numbers in each country.
3. What is the monetary value of winter fuel payments to former UK residents living abroad in 2010/2011?

DWP response

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

Information on the benefit system, the range of benefits available, the rates in payment and eligibility conditions are available on the [Directgov](#) website.

You will see from the DirectGov website that Incapacity Benefit is a contributory-based benefit. Incapacity benefit is only payable to people who have paid sufficient relevant UK National Insurance contributions. Incapacity Benefit is exportable within the EEA, Switzerland and certain countries with which a Reciprocal Agreement exists such as the USA and Jamaica without a time limitation but claimants have still to undergo regular medical assessments, equivalent to the UK personal capability assessment, which ensures continuing entitlement to benefit. For all other countries, the Persons Abroad Regulations apply. Under these Regulations, Incapacity Benefit can be paid for 26 weeks after a person leaves the UK, provided the absence is temporary and either he or she has gone abroad for the specific purpose of receiving treatment for an incapacity that began before he or she left the UK, or he or she was continuously incapable of work for at least 6 months prior to the date that he or she left the UK, and has been continuously incapable of work since then.

The position is similar in respect of SDA.

Also note that Incapacity Benefit was replaced by Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) for new claims from October 2008. The publications and management information described in this letter relate to IB/SDA only, excluding ESA.

The Department publishes National Statistics caseload figures for the combined "abroad and unknown" group on its website at <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=tabtool> and expenditure figures at <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/index.php?page=expenditure> . The most recent caseload figures are at November 2010 and the most recent expenditure figures are for the financial year 2009/10.

In reply to part 2 of your query, detail of the country of residence of IB/SDA claimants living abroad is not held on the National Statistics datasets which we normally use for analysis. The information is held on the source administrative systems, from which management information reports have been produced, although not regularly each month.

The latest available management information held is at February 2011 and can be found in the attached spreadsheet. This information has not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard and should therefore be treated with caution. Please also note that only those countries with a rounded figure of 20 or more claimants are shown. The figures will differ slightly from the National Statistics totals.

In response to question 3, I have established that the Winter Fuel Payment expenditure figure for 2010/11 is not currently available. The Expenditure figure for 2009/10 Winter Fuel Payments to recipients in the European Economic Area and Switzerland is provided in the table below.

	2009/10
Recipients (thousands)	70.8
Expenditure (£millions)	15.2

Source: DWP Accounting and Statistical data

Notes:

- 1) The number of recipients of Winter Fuel Payments is rounded to the nearest hundred, while the expenditure is rounded to the nearest hundred thousand.
- 2) Under European law, some benefits acquired in one Member State must be paid to people who live outside that State, but within the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland. To comply Winter Fuel Payments were extended to former UK residents living elsewhere in the EEA and Switzerland if they qualified for a payment before leaving the UK.

Expenditure on Winter Fuel Payments to recipients within the European Economic Area and Switzerland represents less than one per cent of the total expenditure on Winter Fuel Payments.

You can access official statistics on the number of Winter Fuel payments made to those living in EEA or Switzerland who qualified for the payment before leaving the UK by country at the bottom of the following web page:
<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=wfp> .