

# **Freedom of Information request: 3242/2014**

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## **Information request**

The initial projected time for PIP claims to be processed before policy came into force, The average time taken for claims to be processed as of June 2014(or the latest figures you have), The projected time for claims to be processed by end of 2014.

The number of claimants waiting longer than the projected time for processing claims, The number of claimants whose claims have been processed faster than the average projected time, The total cost (to date) for implementing the new policy.

The number of claimants who would have qualified for each band of Disability Living Allowance as opposed to claimants qualifying for each band of PIP.

Benefits available to claimants suffering hardship due to claims taking longer than the projected claim time, and the number of such claimants.

Finally, the number of appeals made against rulings (either as a total, or as a percentage),and the number of successful claims (most recent data available).

This list is in order of priority for replies, should the list exceed the working time available to process my FOI request.

## **DWP response**

When Personal Independence Payment was initially designed it was expected that the normal journey time from ordinary claim to decision would be approximately between 12 and 15 weeks. See evidence given to the Work and Pensions Committee at question 68 in the link below.

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/WrittenEvidence.svc/EvidenceHtml/4382>

You ask about the projected length of time taken to process claims at the end of the 2014. Ministers have made a commitment that by the autumn people should not be waiting longer than 26 weeks for their assessment and by the end of the year they should not be waiting more than 16 weeks.

Regarding you request for clearance times about average times for claims taken to be processed as of June 2014 or the number of claims waiting longer or faster that the projected time. The publication of any new statistics series

needs to ensure that it is based on robust data and the measures reflect the system that is being delivered and the latest performance. The Department's statisticians are currently looking at developing measures around clearance times and will pre-announce future publication in line with the UK Statistics Authority protocols.

Our commitment to publish data on clearance times was repeated in an answer to a Commons Parliamentary Question (204989) on the 14 July 2014, Column 587W, here:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmhansrd/cm140714/text/140714w0006.htm>

As the statistics are intended for future publication this information is exempt from disclosure under the terms of Section 22 (Information intended for future publication) of the FOIA. This exemption is qualified, and is therefore subject to a public interest test. The public interest test is where the Department considers whether the balance of the public interest falls in favour of withholding or disclosing the information requested.

There are public interest arguments in favour of disclosure of this information at the present time. Disclosure would for example improve transparency in the operations of the Department.

There are public interest arguments against disclosure of this information at the present time. These arguments include that it is in the public interest to adhere to the existing publication process for official statistics, which includes time for the data to be collated and properly verified.

It is also in the public interest to ensure that the publication of official information is a properly planned and managed process, to ensure that the data are accurate once placed into the public domain. It is also in the public interest to ensure that the information is available to all members of the public at the same time, and premature publication could undermine the principle of making the information available to all at the same time through the official publication process.

On this occasion, the balance of the public interest test falls in favour of withholding this information. As I have explained above, statistics on this issue will be published in due course.

We are unable to provide comparisons between individuals qualifying for Personal Independence Payment and Disability Living Allowance rates of benefit as the two benefits are not comparable. Without examining each individual claimant against each differing benefit criteria, it is impossible to say. However the Government's response to the consultation:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/)

[181181/pip-assessment-thresholds-and-consultation-response.pdf](#) at part 8 shows the expected outcomes of the introduction to the new benefit at that time. Available information about Personal Independence Payment claims can be found in the Official Statistics Release of 5 June 2014:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/317425/pip-statistical-release-june-2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/317425/pip-statistical-release-june-2014.pdf)

The costs of Personal Independence Payment were published in February 2014 within the National Audit Office report into the early progress of the benefit: <http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Personal-independence-payment-early-progress.pdf>

It is important to understand that any delays experienced in the new claims process will not affect the date from which claimants are paid. In addition there is nothing to prevent individuals from claiming the relevant income related benefits or applying for the Local Authority Welfare Provision Scheme if necessary.

Finally, the Ministry of Justice publishes quarterly Tribunal statistics. The latest release covers the period January to March 2014 and includes data on PIP:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunal-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2014> the tables at 1.4 and 2.7 will be of interest.