

# Freedom of Information request 2014-2298

Date received 20 May 2014

Date of response 18 June 2014

## Information request

Can we have a breakdown of applications by Southampton residents for 1) PIP assessments and 2) an ESA Work Capability Assessments by age, with information on the length of wait from application to assessment and place of assessment (e.g. Southampton, Cosham, Portsmouth etc.)? If you could provide this information for the last year (or financial year) ideally up until the most up-to-date statistics.

## DWP response

In response to the part of question 1 concerning Personal Independence Payment (PIP) applications, the table below contains statistics on new claims registered for PIP in Southampton Local Authority from April 2013 to March 2014 broken down by age group:

### PIP new claims registered in Southampton Local Authority by age group: April 2013 to March 2014

	Age Group							Unknown	Total
	Under 18	18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55+		
Total	20	140	220	280	140	170	310	-	1,280

**Source:** Department for Work and Pensions, PIP database.

### Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest ten. '-' denotes nil or negligible. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. These figures are sourced from the same database as that used in the first official statistics released on PIP on 5 June 2014, using a new data source and a new methodology. The statistics have been developed using guidelines set out by the UK Statistics Authority, and as new official statistics undergoing evaluation they have accordingly been badged as Experimental Statistics.

In response to question 1 concerning the place of assessment, we can confirm that the Department does hold some information falling within the description specified in your request. However, we estimate that the cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate limit of £600.

The appropriate limit has been specified in regulations and for central Government it is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) the Department is not obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing this part of your request further.

In response to question 1 concerning PIP processing times, the information you have requested is not currently available. Statistics on clearance times are intended for future publication as releasing them at this stage would give an incorrect representation of the process since the system has not yet reached maturity.

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.

Arguments in favour of disclosure: 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.

Arguments against disclosure: 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 explained above, statistics on this issue will be published in due course.

You may be interested to know that on 5 June 2014 the Department published some statistics on PIP and these can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/personal-independence-payment-statistics>

These are the first official statistics to be released on PIP. The statistics have been developed using guidelines set out by the UK Statistics Authority, and while they undergo evaluation they are labelled as experimental statistics.

These statistics cover new claim caseload (cases in payment) to 28 February 2014. They also cover statistics on PIP new claims registrations, decisions made and awards up until 28 March 2014, (an update to the earlier ad hoc publication Personal Independence Payment: management information which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-independence-payment-management-information>).

In response to question 2, the table below gives the statistics on new claims for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) in Southampton Local Authority from July 2012 to June 2013 broken down by:

- Calendar days from the application date to the date of the Decision Maker's final decision on the claim;
- Medical Examination Centre (MEC);
- Client age group.

**Please note that as the Official Statistics on ESA and the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) do not focus on benefit durations, the underlying data used to provide the information has not been quality assured to the same level, and should be treated with caution.**

**ESA new claims in Southampton Local Authority by MEC, duration of process and age band: July 2012 to June 2013**

Medical Examination Centre	Length of time between start of process and JCP DM decision	Age Group							Total
		<18	18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 49	50 - 54	55+	
Total	Total	-	200	400	400	200	200	200	1,700
	13 weeks or less	-	100	100	100	100	100	100	400
	13 to 39 weeks	-	100	200	200	100	100	100	1,000
	39 weeks to 1 year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100
	Over 1 year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100
Unknown / Other	Total	-	-	100	100	-	100	100	600
	13 weeks or less	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	200
	13 to 39 weeks	-	-	100	100	-	-	-	300

	39 weeks to 1 year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Over 1 year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Southampton</b>	<b>Total</b>	-	<b>100</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>1,200</b>
	13 weeks or less	-	-	-	100	-	-	-	<b>200</b>
	13 to 39 weeks	-	100	200	200	100	100	100	<b>700</b>
	39 weeks to 1 year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>100</b>
	Over 1 year	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Source:** Department for Work and Pensions and ATOS Healthcare.

**Notes:**

1. Caseload volumes have been rounded to the nearest 100 therefore addition of all volumes may not sum to total cases. '-' denotes nil or negligible.
2. For around 10% of all new claims, the duration cannot be determined due to data not being available, so these have been excluded from the analysis above. These are mainly claims with the one or other of the dates missing so the time from the claim start to the notification of the WCA output cannot be calculated.
3. The analysis above only includes those where an initial functional assessment has been completed. Those still waiting for an assessment are excluded as they are still awaiting a decision.
4. The data presented above comes from benefit claims data held by the Department for Work and Pensions. It relates to initial ESA claims only; repeat assessments and Incapacity Benefit (IB) claims reassessments are not included. In October 2008, ESA replaced IB for new claims. Starting with a trial in October 2010, and reaching a full scale national roll-out in April 2011, existing IB claims began to be phased out, with claimants reassessed to see if they qualify for ESA instead.
5. As the Official Statistics on ESA and the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) do not focus on benefit durations, the underlying data used to provide the information has not been quality assured to the same level, and should be treated with caution.
6. The data above relates to those clients in Southampton Local Authority who have had a WCA split by Medical Examination Centre (MEC). The number of clients in Southampton LA who had a WCA in a MEC other than Southampton is negligible and is included in the unknown/other category.