

Freedom of Information request 2014-4839

Date received 21 October 2014

Date of response 11 January 2016

Information request

Question 3: between the period 2009 to 2012 covered in Dr Litchfield's report what share of the 170% increase is made up of those people previously found fit for work applying for ESA again?

This is specifically about a figures quoted in Year 4 of Dr Litchfield's report, page 61 - I have attached a link to the report to help put the question into context

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/265351/work-capability-assessment-year-4-paul-litchfield.pdf

Question 3a. Request for analysis of those re-applying for ESA when previously found fit for work within the period in Q3, broken down by the number of times those claimants applied over the 5 year period.

DWP response

The relevant excerpt of the report you linked to above is as follows:

“An increasing number of WCAs are being carried out each year because people claiming ESA face repeat assessment, new people apply, and people previously found Fit for Work opt to apply again. The total number of initial and repeat reassessments per calendar year has increased by 170% between 2009 and 2012²⁶ and it is likely that this figure will continue to increase.

²⁶ Derived from tables 2a and 2b of DWP (2013) ESA: outcomes of Work Capability Assessments October 2013.”

To provide information for the first part of your request it is necessary to look at how many of those found fit for work in 2009 applied for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) again and compare this to those found fit for work in 2012 who applied for ESA again. The relevant information on those re-applying for ESA following a Work Capability Assessment (WCA) decision of fit for work in 2009 and 2012 is shown in Table 1.

Please note that the figures supplied are derived from unpublished information and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. They should therefore be treated with caution.

Table 1: Completed Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Work Capability Assessments (WCA) and those immediately preceded by a Fit for Work (FFW) outcome: assessments completed in 2009 and in 2012, Great Britain

Outcomes of claims where functional assessment has been completed	2009	2012	Difference from 2009 to 2012
Initial assessments	306,300	458,400	152,100
Repeat assessments	5,300	376,700	371,400
Total assessments	311,600	835,100	523,500
Of which, those which were re-applications for ESA, immediately preceded by a FFW decision	3,000	101,600	98,600

Source: Data is derived from administrative data held by the DWP released on 10 December 2015.

Notes:

1. Data is rounded to nearest 100.
2. Figures exclude clerical decisions, clerical cases, and Incapacity Benefits reassessment cases.
3. For re-applications only those assessments immediately preceded by a fit for work outcome have been included.
4. Where an appeal result has been received the original fit for work decision has been adjusted to account for the appeal result.
5. Please note that the figures supplied are derived from unpublished information and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. They should therefore be treated with caution.

The difference between 2009 and 2012 was 523,500 and therefore the share of this increase made up from the 98,600 people previously found fit for work applying for ESA again is 19%.

The information available on those re-applying for ESA after previously being found fit for work, by frequency of re-application, for the whole period 2009 to 2012, a four year period, is shown in Table 2.

Please note that the figures supplied are derived from unpublished information and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. They should therefore be treated with caution.

Table 2: Individuals found Fit for Work who re-applied for ESA by frequency of re-application: assessments completed 2009 - 2012, Great Britain

Frequency of re-application	Number of individuals
1	167,500
2	15,400
3	1,000
4 or more	100
Total individuals	183,900

Source: Data is derived from administrative data held by the DWP released on 10 December 2015.

Notes:

1. Data is rounded to nearest 100. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Figures exclude clerical decisions, clerical cases, and Incapacity Benefits reassessment cases.
3. For re-applications only those assessments immediately preceded by a fit for work outcome have been included.
4. Where an appeal result has been received the original fit for work decision has been adjusted to account for the appeal result.
5. Please note that the figures supplied are derived from unpublished information and have not been quality assured to National Statistics or Official Statistics publication standard. They should therefore be treated with caution.