

Freedom of Information request 2015-1123

Date received 20 March 2015

Date of response 21 April 2015

Information request

Please provide me with the most up to date tables you can on the number of people with autism or Asperger's syndrome receiving each welfare programme.

To clarify my request, I was referring to welfare benefits, like PIP, ESA, IB/SDA, AA and the Disability Living Allowance.

Please provide it on a similar basis to that provided in a similar request Ref: 2014-722

DWP response

In response to your request, the statistics available are given in the tables below.

Table 1 shows the number of people claiming Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance (IB/SDA) with a recorded main condition of "Pervasive Development Disorders" (PDD). This includes Asperger's Syndrome (AS) and Autism in addition to other PDDs. Please note that due to the way the information is held on our system this is the lowest level of detail available and we are unable to separate those cases with AS or Autism from this group.

Table 2 shows the number of people claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA) with main disabling conditions of "Asperger's Syndrome", "Autism" and "Other learning difficulties". From October 2008 the way in which disabling condition is recorded on the live system changed. Previously AS and Autism cases were recorded under the general heading of "Learning Difficulties". Although AS and Autism cases are now recorded separately, many people are still recorded under the general heading of "Learning Difficulties". The figures given are therefore the new cases recorded under Asperger's Syndrome and Autism, and also the old cases which cannot be separated. These are the number of people whose main disabling condition is recorded as "Learning Difficulties" which includes: Down's Syndrome, Fragile X Syndrome, Other Learning Disability, Autism, Asperger's Syndrome and Rett's Disorder.

Table 1: ESA and IB/SDA Caseload with main condition of Pervasive Development Disorders, Great Britain: August 2014

	ESA	IB/SDA
--	-----	--------

Total benefit caseload	2,226,450	312,270
Pervasive Development Disorders	8,650	510

Table 2: AA and DLA (cases in payment) by specified Main Disabling Conditions, Great Britain: May/August 2014

	AA (May 2014)	DLA (August 2014)
All conditions	1,457,160	3,209,800
Asperger's Syndrome	30	39,010
Autism	70	106,010
Other Learning Difficulties (inc. Asperger's Syndrome and Autism)	1,410	299,930

Source: DWP WPLS

Notes for Tables 1 and 2:

1. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest ten.
2. Data is at August 2014 for ESA, IB/SDA, and DLA, and May 2014 for AA, which is the latest available at the time of request.
3. Great Britain total includes a small number of cases who are resident abroad.
4. Totals show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and exclude people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended, for example if they are in hospital.
5. IB was replaced by ESA from October 2008.
6. To qualify for IB/SDA, claimants had to undertake a medical assessment of incapacity for work called a Personal Capability Assessment. Under the ESA regime, new claimants have to undergo the Work Capability assessment. From April 2011 IB/SDA recipients also began to undertake this assessment.
7. The medical condition recorded on the claim form does not itself confer entitlement to the benefit. For example, a decision on entitlement for a customer claiming IB/SDA or ESA on the basis of Autism would be based on their ability to carry out the range of activities assessed by the Personal or Work Capability Assessment; or on the effects of any associated health problems.
8. A diagnosed medical condition does not mean that someone is automatically entitled to DLA/AA. Entitlement is dependent on an assessment of how much help someone needs with personal care and/or mobility because of their disability. These statistics are only collected for administrative purposes.
9. Medical condition is based on evidence provided at the start of the claim and may not represent a claimant's most recent medical condition. Where someone has more than one diagnosis or disabling condition only the predominant one is used.

Table 3 shows the number of people claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP) with a main condition of Autism, Asperger's Syndrome and Rett's Disorder which make up the "Autistic spectrum disorders" category.

Table 3: PIP (cases in payment) by specified Main Disabling Conditions, Great Britain: January 2015

	Total
All conditions	342,808
Asperger's Syndrome	3,670
Autism	4,280
Rett's disorder	10

Source: PIP Computer System claimant records.

Notes for Table 3:

1. Statistical disclosure control has been applied to the table to avoid the identification of individuals.
2. Data is at 31 January 2015 and is the latest available at the time of request.
3. Causes of incapacity are based on the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision, published by the World Health Organisation.
4. Medical condition is based on evidence provided at the start of the claim and may not represent a claimant's most recent medical condition. Where someone has more than one diagnosis or disabling condition only the predominant one is used.
5. PIP started to replace DLA for people aged 16 to 64 from 8 April 2013.
6. PIP is a functional rather than a medical process and individuals with similar disabling conditions may legitimately have different outcomes and payment rates.
7. PIP caseload statistics are cases in payment and include both new claims and reassessment cases, and normal rules and Special Rules for Terminally Ill cases.
8. PIP statistics are currently labelled as experimental and therefore may be subject to change.

You may be interested to know that the PIP Release Strategy can be found here:

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

The Department published the latest set of official statistics on PIP across Great Britain on Wednesday 18 March 2015. 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.

Detailed breakdowns by main disability, including the category "Autistic spectrum disorders", are available and this information can be extracted using Stat-Xplore via the following link: <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/>

Guidance on how to extract the information required from Stat-Xplore can be found at:

https://sw.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/online-help/Stat-Xplore_User_Guide.htm

If you have any difficulties extracting the relevant information please let us know.

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

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Team
Information, Governance and Security Directorate
Department for Work and Pensions

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central FoI Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF www.ico.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Team
Statistical Services
Department for Work and Pensions

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central FoI Team,

Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF www.ico.gov.uk