

Freedom of Information request 2014-463

Date received 30 January 2014

Date of response 27 February 2014

Information request

Could you please provide me with the latest figures showing:

1. The number and proportion of ESA claims that have been decided without a face-to-face assessment.
2. The number and proportion of Support Group recommendations made using paper evidence only.
3. The number and proportion of WRAG recommendations made using paper evidence only.

Please give separate figures for (a) initial assessments; (b) repeat assessments, and (c) IB reassessments.

DWP response

In response to your query, statistics on the number of new claims to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) where the outcome was decided without a face to face assessment, for initial and repeat functional assessments and also Incapacity Benefit Reassessments, and how many of these were placed in the Support Group (SG) or Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) accordingly can be found in the tables below.

Please note that no claimant can be found fit for work without undergoing a face-to-face assessment. In addition, for new ESA claims only SG recommendations can be made using paper evidence only. At repeat ESA assessments and for Incapacity Benefit Reassessments, both SG and WRAG recommendations can be made using paper evidence only.

Total number of Support Group and Work Related Activity Group outcomes for Work Capability Assessments by Assessment method, Great Britain: October 2008 – March 2013

	All Assessments	Of which: Paper-based	
		Number	Proportion
New claims - <u>Initial</u> Work Capability Assessments	367,100	221,000	60%
New claims - <u>Repeat</u> Work Capability Assessments	801,500	443,000	55%
Incapacity Benefit Reassessments	781,000	457,600	59%

Number of Support Group outcomes for Work Capability Assessments by Assessment method, Great Britain: October 2008 – March 2013

	All Assessments	Of which: Paper-based	
		Number	Proportion
New claims - <u>Initial</u> Work Capability Assessments	367,100	221,000	60%
New claims - <u>Repeat</u> Work Capability Assessments	376,800	242,200	64%
Incapacity Benefit Reassessments	361,100	243,600	67%

Number of Work Related Activity Group outcomes for Work Capability Assessments by Assessment method, Great Britain: October 2008 – March 2013

	All Assessments	Of which: Paper-based	
		Number	Proportion
New claims - <u>Repeat</u> Work Capability Assessments	424,700	200,900	47%
Incapacity Benefit Reassessments	419,900	214,000	51%

Source: Data in the above tables is derived from administrative data held by the DWP and assessment data provided by Atos Healthcare.

Notes:

1. Data is rounded to nearest 100. Totals may not sum due to rounding. Figures exclude clerical cases.
2. Figures are for the period 27th October 2008 to 31st March 2013.
3. ESA new claims initial and repeat assessments are tabled by claim start date, Incapacity Benefits Reassessments are tabled by referral date.
4. The reassessment of existing incapacity benefits claimants started in October 2010 with a trial in the Burnley and Aberdeen areas. Previously published information on the reassessment trials is available on the DWP web-site at the following link:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/223107/wca_ib_reassessment_interim.pdf
5. No claimant can be found fit for work without undergoing a face-to-face assessment. In addition, for new ESA claims only SG recommendations can be made using paper evidence only. At repeat ESA assessments and for Incapacity Benefit Reassessments, both SG and WRAG recommendations can be made using paper evidence only.