

# DWP Claimant Service and Experience Survey Methodological Note

Data for 2015/16

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17 January 2017

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# 1 Survey design

## 1.1 Background

Between July 2015 and May 2016, Kantar Public (formerly TNS BMRB) conducted a telephone survey among 15,626 people in four waves of fieldwork at quarterly intervals. Participants were either personally in receipt of benefits administered through DWP, or had been in contact with DWP on a customer's behalf. The survey was designed to measure their experiences of the service, and their attitudes towards, and satisfaction with, the service. Customers who had not been in touch with DWP or used its services within the three months prior to being contacted by Kantar Public were excluded from the survey. This meant that customer responses to the survey were informed by recent personal experience of interacting with DWP services.

Consistent with the methodology of the 2014/15 survey, the sample was drawn to achieve a representative proportion of contacting customers from DWP's broader customer base<sup>1</sup>, thereby providing feedback from a broad spectrum of DWP's customers.

The 2015/16 survey was carried out during a period of structural change across the benefit landscape. The ongoing roll out of Universal Credit aims to replace six existing benefits and tax credits with one streamlined benefit that should make application and administration simpler. Further to this, a gradual move to replace some Disability Living Allowance claims with the Personal Independence Payment was also taking place alongside the survey.

## 1.2 Questionnaire

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<sup>1</sup> Claimants (or their representatives) in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support, Universal Credit, Carer's Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments, Attendance Allowance, State Pension or Pension Credit were included in the survey. The survey did not specifically seek to include people claiming Incapacity Benefit, Bereavement benefits, Invalidity Allowance, War Disablement Pension, Industrial Injuries Disablement benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, benefits related to the Pneumoconiosis, Byssinosis and Miscellaneous Diseases Benefits Scheme, Widow's benefits, Winter Fuel Payments, Workmen's Compensation Supplementation, Statutory Sick Pay, Maternity Allowance, or Statutory Maternity/Paternity/Adoption pay.

The interview was on average approximately 17 minutes in length. Core modules of questions were broadly consistent with 2014/15 and established an individual transaction undertaken within the past three months. If the customer had engaged in more than one transaction with DWP, the questionnaire contained a hierarchical list to select the most complex, involved or infrequent transaction to focus on, above more routine or simple contact. The list was read out in strict order to respondents. If the interview was conducted more than three months after the customer last had contact with DWP the interview was terminated. Subsequent question modules were framed around this transaction and focused on specific channels of contact with DWP (including online, telephone, face to face and written communications). In order to maximise responses for each channel, a series of general questions around points of contact were also later asked. Further sections of the questionnaire topics included the responsiveness of DWP, the outcome of contact with DWP (or of any appeals made) and a final section on internet usage, both generally and in the context of dealings with the Department.

The order of selected transactions was as follows:

1. Started a new claim for a benefit
2. Had a reassessment of your entitlement following a change of benefit (for example from Jobseekers Allowance to Employment and Support Allowance)
3. Asked DWP to reconsider or appeal a decision (that you didn't agree with concerning the benefit you applied for)
4. [If receiving Employment Support Allowance] Received a decision following a medical assessment
5. [If benefit requires contact with Jobcentre Plus] Had an interview or review meeting (for example at a Jobcentre)
6. [If benefit requires contact with Jobcentre Plus] Received notification of a sanction
7. Reported a change of circumstances to DWP, or stopped a claim
8. Reported problems with a benefit you are receiving (for example, delayed or missing payment, or incorrect closure of a claim)
9. [If benefit requires contact with Jobcentre Plus] Made a request for an advance payment to benefits
10. [If benefit requires contact with Jobcentre Plus] Received notification of a change to benefit payment (for example from monthly to fortnightly)
11. Asked for details of benefits you could claim
12. [If State Pension or Pension Credit customer] Enquired about the amount of State Pension or Pension Credit you are entitled to
13. [If benefit requires contact with Jobcentre Plus] Discussed jobs or training opportunities with someone at the Jobcentre.

- 14. [If benefit requires contact with Jobcentre Plus] Signed on
- 15. Visited the website [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)
- 16. Made a complaint
- 17. [If benefit requires contact with Jobcentre Plus] Looked for job vacancies
- 18. [If benefit requires contact with Jobcentre Plus] Made an appointment (e.g. for an interview at a Jobcentre) or asked for an appointment to be changed.
- 19. Tried to get help – understanding or completing a form
- 20. [If benefit requires contact with Jobcentre Plus] Applied for financial help (e.g. for travel to interviews, childcare costs, training, moving into work, or mortgage relief)
- 21. Tried to get information or an update on progress
- 22. Requested a form
- 23. Enquired about your eligibility for another benefit
- 24. No contact with DWP [ineligible for survey]

## 2 Sampling

### 2.1 Sample eligibility

In order to provide useful information about the current state of service, the survey was designed to represent the population of DWP customers who have had recent dealings with the Department rather than all benefit recipients.

A customer was defined as either a state pensioner (SP) or as somebody currently claiming (or having recently claimed) one of the following benefits:

- ☐ Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- ☐ Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- ☐ Income Support (IS)
- ☐ Universal Credit Live Service (UC)
- ☐ Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- ☐ Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- ☐ Carer's Allowance (CA)
- ☐ Pension Credit (PC)
- ☐ Attendance allowance (AA)

Appointees, persons appointed by DWP to act on behalf of claimants deemed incapable of acting on their own behalf, were also defined as DWP customers; as were parents or guardians of claimants below the age of 16.

All 'professional' customer representatives were excluded from the research (e.g. Citizens' Advice Bureaux, solicitors making contact on behalf of a client, MPs making contact on behalf of a constituent). These parties were considered to be likely to make contact on behalf of a number of different people and therefore their responses an 'average' of all their contact with DWP, rather than being focused on a specific case.

### 2.2 Sample frame

The sample was primarily drawn from an internal DWP administrative dataset derived from operational management information. This dataset holds data about every person who made a new claim for the State Pension or a benefit (excluding PIP and

UC) or had been through some change of circumstance that could be identified on the system (bank details, address, marital status etc). This served as an effective sample frame as it allowed the identification of claimants who have made contact with DWP at some point during the designated three month period.<sup>2</sup> Universal Credit Live customers were sampled through a separate data extract, whilst PIP customers were sampled from a 'live' PIP administrative database, both held by DWP. Notably, no types of customer contact which did not lead to a new claim or change of circumstance, such as general customer enquiries, could be identified from this source.

All Universal Credit Live, Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance claimants who appeared in DWP administrative data as claiming that benefit during a designated three month period were eligible for the survey, regardless of whether they had made a new claim or been through a change of circumstances as UC, JSA, and some ESA claimants are under obligation, by the terms of their claim, to contact the Jobcentre regularly.

Some customers were excluded from taking part in the survey for ethical reasons under criteria determined by DWP. Customers were excluded from the sample if they were determined to be one or more of the following:

- Terminally ill
- Over 90 years old
- Potentially violent
- A sensitive case
- A prisoner
- Homeless
- Someone who has been previously sampled in a DWP survey

In a departure from the 2014/15 methodology, customers who had had claims for Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance disallowed were no longer sampled. This was to allow for comparability with other benefits in the survey where disallowed cases are not sampled.

## **2.3 Sample selection**

### **Customers on working-age benefits**

The working age sample was drawn from contacting customers in receipt of ESA, JSA, UC and IS. Some groups were oversampled to generate a sufficient number of

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<sup>2</sup> The assumption was made that customers who had a different status at the start and end of the three month period had contacted DWP (either directly or through an intermediary) to report their change of circumstance.

interviews for robust sub-group analysis. The weighting adjustment, used to ensure that results for the whole survey were representative of the contacting population, can be found in Section 4 of this report. Within each stratum of customer type the records were ordered by Jobcentre Plus Region<sup>3</sup>, age, gender and length of claim before making a random selection of sample for the survey.

### **Customers receiving pensions, carers or disability benefits**

The remainder of the survey sample was drawn from records of customers in contact among the following benefit groups:

- Attendance Allowance (AA)
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Carer's Allowance (CA)
- State Pension (SP)
- Pension Credit (PC)
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Each benefit was stratified by an individual's reason for contact with the Department, as recorded by DWP (e.g. to make a claim, or to report a change of circumstances). The records in these strata were ordered by Government Office Region<sup>4</sup>, age, gender and length of claim, and a random selection was made.

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<sup>3</sup> The seven Jobcentre Plus 'Regions' or 'Groups' reflect DWP sub-national operational structures and consist of: North West England, Central England, Wales, North East England, Southern England, Scotland, and London and Home Counties.

<sup>4</sup> The nine Government Office Regions (GOR) are the primary statistical subdivisions of England and are made up of complete counties, unitary authorities, metropolitan counties and London boroughs. GOR have been referred to as 'regions' since 2011, but retain the names, codes and boundaries of the former GOR. The nine regions are: East Midlands, East of England, London, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber. Scotland and Wales are not subdivided into GORs but are listed with them as regions in GB-wide statistical comparisons.



## 3 Fieldwork and response

### 3.1 Fieldwork

All respondents were sent an advance letter on DWP-headed paper before the start of fieldwork. This letter explained the purpose of the study, reasons for their inclusion in the research sample and the form the survey would take. The letters included a free postal address and freephone number for respondents to call if they did not wish to be contacted or if they required help or further information about the study. Anyone who contacted Kantar Public to opt out of the research was removed from the sample and not called during the fieldwork period.

Telephone fieldwork was conducted in four stages using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). In total 15,626 interviews were carried out during the following waves of fieldwork:

- Quarter 1: 10<sup>th</sup> July 2015 – 11<sup>th</sup> August 2015
- Quarter 2: 28<sup>th</sup> September 2015 – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2015
- Quarter 3: 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016 – 14<sup>th</sup> February 2016
- Quarter 4: 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016 – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016

A dedicated boost of interviews with UC customers was conducted between 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and 4<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

### 3.2 Response

Table 1 summarises the interviews achieved by benefit group across the fieldwork periods.

In 2015/16 DWP set targets each quarter for the required number of interviews for each benefit group to either produce a representative proportion of the benefit group in the eventual survey or a higher number of interviews for sub-group analysis where required. It is therefore not strictly appropriate to report response rates as fieldwork for a benefit group ceased if a target was reached.

Over the full year, the fieldwork conversion rate was 39%. This is calculated based on the productivity of valid and eligible sample. The definition of eligibility excludes respondents who died; respondents with invalid or incorrect telephone numbers; cases where a named respondent was unknown at the telephone number recorded in the sample; and claimants who did not contact (or could not remember contacting) DWP within the last three months. The overall conversion rate (26 per cent) is calculated as the number of interviews divided by the number of cases issued. Table 2 gives an overview of the interviews achieved, broken down by benefit.

## 4 Coding and weighting data

Most questions in the questionnaire were closed, and did not require coding. For those questions that did require coding established code-frames built up from responses collected in previous years were used. Code-frames were adjusted where necessary to accommodate new responses (as long as a new response was given by 10 per cent of more of the claimants who answered the question).

Weighting was applied to the data to ensure the survey respondents were representative of the population to which they were generalising. There were two stages to the weighting: non-response weights to correct for non-response during fieldwork, and design weights used to account for the survey design.

Non-response weights were created to correct for differing levels of response between different groups of individuals. The non-response weights were calibrated at the benefit level so that they matched the population of (contacting) benefit recipients in terms of gender, age, region, length of claim, and – in the case of pension-related, carer and disability-related benefits – reason why contact was recorded.

Design weights were calculated to take account of unequal selection probabilities across strata. These were calculated at the time of selection as  $1/\text{probability of selection}$ . A 'DWP weight' was created after fieldwork was completed to match the profile of the completed interviews in each benefit group to the overall population of contacting DWP claimants, and allow for analysis at the overall DWP level. This was created by rescaling the 'benefit weights' described above to reflect the relative population size of each benefit group as a proportion of all contacting claimants. The population of contacting claimants was provided through DWP management information, but adjusted using information from the survey.<sup>5</sup> The representativeness of the sample is shown in Table 3.

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<sup>5</sup> DWP's management information enumerated individuals who had a recorded transaction or who were claiming a working-age benefit during a three-month window prior to interview. It was possible to improve estimates of the contacting population using survey information, by calculating the proportion of sampled individuals who reported that they had not, in fact, had contact with DWP of any kind during that window, and applying those proportions onto DWP's population figures.

## 5 Appendix

**Table 1**

**Breakdown of achieved interviews by benefit and quarter**

<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Quarter 1</b>	<b>Quarter 2</b>	<b>Quarter 3</b>	<b>UC Boost</b>	<b>Quarter 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
Attendance Allowance (AA)	64	138	135		113	450
Disability and Living Allowance (DLA)	87	137	113		113	450
Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)	1,425	1,402	1,375		1,401	5,603
Carer's Allowance (CA)	112	103	119		114	448
Income Support (IS)	113	113	113		109	448
Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)	1,425	1,402	1,375		1,408	5,610
Pension Credit (PC)	111	115	113		113	452
Personal Independence Payment (PIP)	172	194	235		200	801
State Pension (SP)	140	86	113		112	451
Universal Credit (UC)	230	170	190	204	119	913
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,326</b>	<b>16,223</b>	<b>16,219</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>16,060</b>	<b>15,626</b>

**Table 2**  
**Response details**

	<b>AA</b>	<b>DLA</b>	<b>ESA</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>IS</b>	<b>JSA</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>PIP</b>	<b>SP</b>	<b>UC</b>	<b>Total</b>
Sample sent advance letters	4,740	2,428	22,078	1,796	1,798	22,244	2,680	3,821	2,670	3,883	67,140
Office opt-out before fieldwork	804	95	1,043	64	23	443	323	172	320	25	3,312
Unused sample	78	34	322	12	10	156	32	39	42	33	758
Sample issued to telephone unit	3,936	2,333	21,035	1,732	1,775	21,801	2,357	3,649	2,350	3,858	63,828
Sample loaded into CATI	3,936	2,332	19,740	1,732	1,775	20,090	2,357	3,649	2,348	3,857	60,819
Invalid sample data	1,149	519	5,244	400	341	5,765	503	754	491	842	15,901
Ineligible	560	233	1,444	259	37	361	525	812	522	103	4,841
No recent contact with DWP	136	52	1,440	69	37	360	102	236	88	103	2,608
Died	60	5	24	1	1	11	15	17	5	3	141
Valid sample (in scope of fieldwork)	2,227	1,580	13,052	1,073	1,397	13,964	1,779	2,083	1,335	2,912	40,077

# **DWP Claimant Service and Experience Survey Data Methodological Note – Data for 2015/6**

	<b>AA</b>	<b>DLA</b>	<b>ESA</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>IS</b>	<b>JSA</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>PIP</b>	<b>SP</b>	<b>UC</b>	<b>Total</b>
Refusals (including proxy refusals)	244	86	1,240	93	58	922	153	221	150	148	3,279
Abandoned interview	5	1	24	0	1	17	1	5	2	5	61
Unavailable during fieldwork	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unresolved	1,833	836	9,477	992	398	6,354	1,142	1,926	1,199	1,955	25,441
Achieved interviews	450	450	5,603	448	448	5,610	452	801	451	913	15,626
Conversion rate (%)	20%	28%	43%	42%	32%	40%	34%	38%	34%	31%	39%

**Table 3****Representativeness of the sample**

	AA	DLA	ESA	CA	IS	JSA	PC	PIP	SP	UC	Total
2015/2016 contacting population	144,048	295,982	9,821,481	86,763	99,484	3,481,529	605,095	305,271	416,237	442,229	15,698,119
Proportion of total DWP contacting population	0.92%	1.89%	62.56%	0.55%	0.63%	22.18%	3.85%	1.94%	2.65%	2.82%	100.00%
2015/2016 interviews	450	450	5,603	448	448	5,610	452	801	451	913	15,626
Proportion of total survey population	2.88%	2.88%	35.86%	2.87%	2.87%	35.90%	2.89%	5.13%	2.89%	5.84%	100.00%
Whether benefit group is under or over represented in the sample	Over	Over	Under	Over	Over	Over	Under	Over	Over	Over	