

# Employment and Support Allowance – Incapacity Benefits Reassessments: Outcomes of Work Capability Assessments by duration of claim

14 May 2012

# Background

In October 2008, existing benefits paid on grounds of incapacity, that is Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) and Income Support (IS) on the grounds of incapacity, were replaced with Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) for all new claimants. Between October 2010 and Spring 2014 most claimants who receive IB, SDA and IS paid on the grounds of illness or disability will be assessed to see if they qualify for ESA and to ensure they get the help they need to return to work where appropriate.

On 15 March 2012, the Department published information on the outcomes of incapacity benefits reassessments at a national level for the first time. The report published in March presents information on the reassessment of incapacity benefits claimants for ESA in Great Britain, for claims that were referred for reassessment before the end of July 2011. The publication can be found at the following link:

[http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa\\_ibr](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa_ibr)

This publication gives further detail on the claims included in the publication mentioned above by breaking down the outcomes by the length of the previous incapacity benefits claim.

# Results

Tables 1 and 2 provide a breakdown of both the *outcomes* of claims where the functional assessment has been completed and the *status* of claims where the functional assessment has not been completed by the length of the previous incapacity benefits claim. The length of the claim is measured as the period between the claim start date and the date the claim has been referred for reassessment.

The figures in this publication do not reflect final outcomes, because they do not include the effect of appeals lodged and awaiting a hearing. For these reasons it is likely that the statistics underestimate the proportion of claimants who will ultimately be awarded ESA.

Separate tables showing outcomes of appeals may not be suitable for publication for some time due to the length of the appeals process. Future analysis will have a broader scope as further appeals have been heard and data on the outcomes becomes available.

Table 1 presents the outcomes by duration of the previous incapacity benefits claim and column proportions – i.e. it shows the outcomes by duration as a proportion of all

claims with that outcome. For example, Table 1 shows that of all those referred for incapacity benefits reassessment before the end of July 2011, 11 per cent have been on incapacity benefits for more than 15 years previously. It also shows that a higher proportion of those assessed to be in the Support Group have duration of 15 years or more, at 15 per cent.

Table 2 presents the same information but with row proportions – I.e, it shows the outcomes by duration as a proportion of all claims with that duration. For example, Table 2 shows that of all those referred for incapacity benefits reassessment before the end of July 2011, 34 per cent were assessed as Fit for Work. However, this varies by duration of previous incapacity benefits claim; for those with duration of 5 years or less, 39 per cent have been assessed as fit for work, whereas for those with duration of 15 years or more, 25 per cent have been assessed as fit for work. There are also variations in the proportions being assessed to be in the Support Group of ESA by duration – with 21 per cent of those with duration of 5 years of less compared to 37 per cent for those with duration of 15 years or more.

Overall, these results suggest there is a link between duration of previous incapacity benefits claim and the outcome of incapacity benefits reassessment, with those with the longest durations more likely to be assessed as eligible for ESA. This may be as a result of them having longer term, or multiple, conditions<sup>1</sup>.

The results in this publication are linked to the characteristics of the claimants included and should not be taken as an indication of future outcomes.

**Kristine Langenbucher ([Kristine.Langenbucher@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Kristine.Langenbucher@dwp.gsi.gov.uk))**

**Department for Work and Pensions**

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<sup>1</sup> This statement should not be interpreted to mean that the above is anything more than a possible reason behind the differences, and there may also be other undetected factors at work.

Employment and Support Allowance – Incapacity Benefits Reassessments: Outcomes of Work Capability Assessments by duration of claim

**Table 1: Outcome of Work Capability Assessments of existing IB claims, adjusted to account for the outcome of appeal, by duration of claim, Great Britain**

Scope: initial functional assessment and appeal – reassessment of existing IB/SDA/IS claims or that following an appeal.

Coverage: Great Britain.

Periods: all statistics are based on claims have been referred for reassessment between October 2010 and July 2011.

Duration of incapacity benefits claim until referral for reassessment	Outcomes of claims where functional assessment has been completed					Status of claims where functional assessment has not been completed			Total caseload
	Entitled to Employment and Support Allowance:			Fit for Work	Any outcome	Closed before assessment	Still in progress	Any status	
	Work Related Activity Group	Support Group	Either group						
	(a)	(b)	(a+b)	(c)	(a+b+c)	(d)	(e)	(d+e)	(a+b+c+d+e)
<i>Caseload</i>									
5 years or less	13,200	9,000	22,200	16,800	39,000	1,800	2,900	4,700	43,600
More than 5 and less than 10 years	16,900	14,800	31,700	17,800	49,400	1,500	2,800	4,500	53,800
More than 10 and less than 15 years	9,000	8,000	17,000	9,000	26,000	700	1,300	2,100	28,000
More than 15 years	5,100	5,800	10,900	3,900	14,800	300	600	1,000	15,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,200</b>	<b>37,600</b>	<b>81,800</b>	<b>47,400</b>	<b>129,200</b>	<b>4,300</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>141,100</b>
<i>Proportions (outcomes by duration as a proportion of all claims with that outcome)</i>									
5 years or less	30	24	27	35	30	41	37	39	31
More than 5 and less than 10 years	38	39	39	37	38	36	37	37	38
More than 10 and less than 15 years	20	21	21	19	20	15	18	17	20
More than 15 years	12	15	13	8	11	8	8	8	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2: Outcome of Work Capability Assessments of existing IB claims, adjusted to account for the outcome of appeal, by duration of claim, Great Britain**

Scope: initial functional assessment and appeal – reassessment of existing IB/SDA/IS claims or that following an appeal.

Coverage: Great Britain.

Periods: all statistics are based on claims have been referred for reassessment between October 2010 and July 2011.

Duration of incapacity benefits claim until referral for reassessment	Outcomes of claims where functional assessment has been completed					Status of claims where functional assessment has not been completed			Total caseload
	Entitled to Employment and Support Allowance:			Fit for Work	Any outcome	Closed before assessment	Still in progress	Any status	
	Work Related Activity Group	Support Group	Either group						
	(a)	(b)	(a+b)	(c)	(a+b+c)	(d)	(e)	(d+e)	(a+b+c+d+e)
<i>Caseload</i>									
5 years or less	13,200	9,000	22,200	16,800	39,000	1,800	2,900	4,700	43,600
More than 5 and less than 10 years	16,900	14,800	31,700	17,800	49,400	1,500	2,800	4,500	53,800
More than 10 and less than 15 years	9,000	8,000	17,000	9,000	26,000	700	1,300	2,100	28,000
More than 15 years	5,100	5,800	10,900	3,900	14,800	300	600	1,000	15,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,200</b>	<b>37,600</b>	<b>81,800</b>	<b>47,400</b>	<b>129,200</b>	<b>4,300</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>141,100</b>
<i>Proportions (outcomes by duration as a proportion of all claims in that duration)</i>									
5 years or less	30	21	51	39	89	4	7	11	100
More than 5 and less than 10 years	31	28	59	33	92	3	5	8	100
More than 10 and less than 15 years	32	29	61	32	93	3	5	8	100
More than 15 years	32	37	69	25	94	2	4	6	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>

**Rounding:**

All values are rounded; therefore addition of all volumes for outcomes and statuses may not sum to total cases, and addition of all percentages may not sum to 100 per cent.

**Notes:**

1) This note is a summary. A full explanation is available in the report: Employment and Support Allowance – Incapacity Benefits Reassessments: Outcomes of Work Capability Assessments, Great Britain which is published on the Department for Work and Pensions website: [http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa\\_ibr](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa_ibr)

2) Data sources: Raw data used to identify benefit claimants, ESA claims, WCA process outcomes and statuses, and establish appeals results are:

DWP's benefit administration datasets covering new claims (starting from 27 October 2008); and

Atos Healthcare's face to face assessment, ESA85, data and limited capability for work questionnaire, ESA50, data.

3) Definitions: The data presented in this publication is taken from a dataset which combines the data stated above. Under the counting rules, the units of analysis, used by the department:

a claim is a pre-existing IB, SDA or IS claim going through the reassessment process for ESA from 11 October 2010;

an outcome is where the assessment is completed, meaning in most cases that the limited capability for work questionnaire and face to face assessment has been undertaken;

a status is where the assessment phase is not completed; and

the duration is measured between the claim start date and the date the claim has been referred for reassessment. The date of a claimant's referral for reassessment is based on the review date of their Personal Capability Assessment (PCA); for more details please see the report 'Employment and Support Allowance – Incapacity Benefits Reassessments: Outcomes of Work Capability Assessments, Great Britain', [http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa\\_ibr](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/workingage/index.php?page=esa_ibr).