

Duration on out-of-work benefits, Great Britain

October 2012

Methodology

To identify the number of individuals that have been claiming out-of-work benefits for different proportions of four years covering December 2007 to November 2011, we have undertaken the following:

- Using a 5% sample of the DWP benefits component of the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study¹, we identified claimants who had experienced spells on one or more out-of-work benefits (Job Seekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Income Support) over a four-year period (December 2007 to November 2011).
- We only included those who could have spent the entire period on out-of-work benefits (by excluding those aged above 60 at the end of the period or below 16 at the start).
- Where it was possible for a claimant to receive more than one out-of-work benefit at a time (e.g. Income Support and Incapacity Benefit) we ensured this was counted as a single spell.
- For each claimant we then summed the total period spent on out-of-work benefits over the four years, which might include multiple separate spells on benefit.
- To simplify the analysis durations were counted in whole months and onflows or exits from benefit were assumed to equate to a half month on benefit.

¹ The Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) links benefit and programme information held by DWP on its customers, with employment records from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Only DWP data was used for this analysis.

Results

Table 1 and 2 shows the results of the analysis. Table 1 presents current² benefit claimants by the proportion of time spent on out-of-work benefits³ over the four years, December 2007 to November 2011. For example, of those currently on out-of-work benefits, 59% or around 2.5 million individuals have been claiming for at least 75% of the four-year period. This equates to at least 3 out of 4 years claiming out-of-work benefits.

The data has been broken down to show the proportion of time spent on out-of-work benefits, by benefit currently received. For example, of those on out-of-work benefits (around 4.3million), 8% are currently on JSA and have been on out-of-work benefits for at least 75% of the four-year period.

Table 2 shows the proportion of time spent on out-of-work benefits for those currently receiving one of the following;

- Jobseekers Allowance (JSA)
- Employment and Support Allowance (assessment phase and WRAG only)
- Income Support for lone parents (IS LP)

From table 2 we can see that, 913 thousand people, or 36%, are currently receiving one of the above and have been on out-of-work benefits for at least 75% of the four-year period. A breakdown of this by current benefit received is also provided. This shows, for example, of those receiving the benefits listed (around 2.5 million), 14% are currently on JSA and have been on out-of-work benefits for at least 75% of the four-year period.

Not all of the time spent on benefit will have been built up on the current benefit claim or on the current type benefit. For example, a person who has moved over from lone parent Income Support to Jobseekers Allowance in the last six months may have spent all of the last 4 years claiming benefits, but only the last six months on JSA. Within the individual benefit breakdown in tables 1 and 2 this person would be classified as a current recipient of JSA.

The introduction of Employment and Support Allowance and subsequent ongoing reassessment of Incapacity Benefit claimants may also affect the proportion of people with longer periods of time built up on benefit who are currently claiming JSA. Similarly in table 2, a person currently in the ESA assessment phase that has spent at least 75% of the four-year period on benefit may have built up the majority of that time while on Incapacity Benefit.

²'Current' refers to November 11.

³ See note (1) of Table 1.

Table 1: Out-of-work benefit claimants in November 2011, by proportion of time spent on benefit from December 2007 to November 2011, GB

	0-25% (up to 1 year)	25-50% (1 to 2 years)	50-75% (2 to 3 years)	75-100% (3 to 4 years)	Total
Out-of-work benefit claimants, November 2011 (1)	657,000	533,000	547,000	2,521,000	4,258,000
Proportion of claimants	15%	13%	13%	59%	100%
Of which are currently on:					
JSA	10%	7%	6%	8%	31%
IS (2)	2%	2%	3%	10%	17%
Incapacity benefits (ESA/IB/SDA) (3)	4%	3%	4%	41%	52%

Source: DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, 5% sample, GB

(1) Out-of-work benefits include Job Seekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance, Employment Support Allowance, Income Support. Figures include some people working less than 16 hours and on one of the benefits listed.

(2) IS excludes people on Income Support and Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance.

(3) Incapacity benefits include ESA, IB/SDA and claimants on a combination of IS and IB/SDA.

IB/SDA includes people on Income Support and Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance.

Figures exclude those who would have been 16 years or under in 2007 and aged 60 or over in November 2011.

Table 2: JSA, ESA (assessment phase and WRAG) and lone parent IS claimants in November 2011, by proportion of time spent on out-of-work benefits from December 2007 to November 2011, GB

	0-25% (up to 1 year)	25-50% (1 to 2 years)	50-75% (2 to 3 years)	75-100% (3 to 4 years)	Total
Claimants on JSA, ESA assessment phase and WRAG, Income Support for lone parents in November 2011 (1)	620,000	487,000	488,000	913,000	2,508,000
Proportion of claimants	25%	19%	19%	36%	100%
Of which are currently on:					
JSA	17%	12%	10%	14%	52%
ESA assessment phase	5%	3%	2%	5%	15%
ESA WRAG	1%	2%	3%	5%	11%
IS Lone Parents	2%	3%	4%	13%	22%

Source: DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, 5% sample, GB

(1) Jobseekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance assessment phase and Work Related Activity Group and Income Support for Lone Parents.

Figures exclude those who would have been 16 years or under in 2007 and aged 60 or over in November 2011.

**Department for Work and Pensions
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