



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

# Statistics on benefit claimants with a main disabling condition of drug and alcohol

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# Overview

This publication provides information about the number of claimants in receipt of different types of incapacity benefit (Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA)) who have a primary disabling condition of alcohol misuse or drugs misuse, and how this has changed over time.

# Methodology

The publication presents the number of claimants in receipt of different types of incapacity benefit (IB/SDA and ESA) whose primary disabling condition is recorded as either alcohol misuse or drugs misuse. These incapacity benefits are paid to people who are under State Pension age<sup>1</sup> and who have been assessed as being incapable of work. Incapacity benefits include:

- **ESA**

ESA was introduced on 27 October 2008 for new claimants. ESA offers personalised support and financial help to assist claimants prepare for, and find, appropriate work. ESA also provides increased financial support for those that have an illness or disability that severely affects their ability to work. Many claimants of earlier incapacity benefits are in the process of being assessed against the ESA Work Capability Assessment, and migrated onto ESA or Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA), where appropriate.

More information about ESA, including how to claim it, can be found on the gov.uk website at <https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/overview>

- **IB**

IB provides support for those who cannot work because of an illness or disability and applies to people who claimed an incapacity benefit before the introduction of ESA in October 2008. Existing IB claimants are in the process of being reassessed and migrated onto ESA or JSA, where appropriate.

- **SDA**

SDA could be claimed prior to April 2001 for those unable to work for at least 28 consecutive weeks because of illness or disability. As with IB claimants, remaining SDA claimants are in the process of being reassessed and migrated to ESA.

The Department regularly publishes a range of statistics about IB, SDA and ESA via the statistics tabulation tool. Details can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions/series/dwp-statistics-tabulation-tool>.

Claimants of ESA undergo a Work Capability Assessment. Previously, IB claimants underwent a similar assessment called the Personal Capability Assessment. As part of the assessment process, the claimant's primary disabling condition is recorded. This condition does not in itself automatically confer entitlement to an incapacity benefit: Entitlement to IB and ESA is based on the claimant's ability to carry out a

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<sup>1</sup> For men, State Pension age is currently 65 years. For women, State Pension age is gradually increasing. By 2018 it will also be 65 years. Beyond 2018, State Pension age for both men and women is due to increase further.

range of activities assessed as part of the Personal or Work Capability Assessment, or on the effects of any associated mental health problems.

Figures for IB and SDA have been combined in order to show the total number of claimants on legacy incapacity benefits. The figures have been presented for August in each year, from 2007 until 2013<sup>2</sup>. It is likely that the figures are an undercount of the total number of claimants with a drug or alcohol problem. This is because some claimants are likely to have other medical conditions or disabilities which are recorded as the primary disabling condition, rather than their alcohol or drugs issues.

As with all claimants of incapacity benefits, claimants with a primary disabling condition of alcohol or drugs misuse do not have entitlement directly because this, but because of the resulting impact on their ability to perform a range of activities, or the associated effects on their mental health.

Similar analysis on the main disabling conditions of IB/SDA and ESA claimants has been previously released by the Department, most recently on January 2014. This earlier analysis is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistics-on-dla-ib-sda-and-esa-claimants-with-drug-and-alcohol-misuse-as-the-main-disabling-condition-in-lincolnshire-may-2013>

The analysis presented in this section provides more up-to-date figures than those which have previously been published (up until August 2013). It also includes figures that relate to earlier points in time than previously published.

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<sup>2</sup> A breakdown of the main disabling condition for ESA claimants as at August 2009 has not been included in this analysis due to the incompleteness of the available information.

# Results

## Incapacity benefits for alcohol misuse claimants

Table 1, shown below, gives information about the number of IB/SDA and ESA claimants who had alcohol misuse recorded as their primary disabling condition at specific points in time between August 2007 and August 2013.

Claimants of IB/SDA or ESA, with a primary disabling condition of alcohol misuse made up just over 2% of all claimants entitled to those benefits in August 2013. This percentage has remained largely unchanged since August 2010.

**Table 1 – IB/SDA and ESA claimants with a primary disabling condition of alcohol misuse, Great Britain 2007 – 2013**

August	Number of benefit claimants with a primary disabling condition of alcohol misuse in receipt of:			Total IB/SDA and ESA claimant population	Percentage of all IB/SDA and ESA claimants with a primary disabling condition of alcohol misuse
	IB/SDA	ESA	IB/SDA or ESA		
2007	52,090	.	52,090	2,683,160	1.9%
2008	53,980	.	53,980	2,632,000	2.1%
2009	47,760	-	-	2,674,010	-
2010	42,360	14,700	57,060	2,646,540	2.2%
2011	37,600	18,710	56,310	2,619,680	2.1%
2012	21,980	32,760	54,740	2,552,350	2.1%
2013	8,340	45,540	53,880	2,473,420	2.2%

Source: 100% WPLS. All figures rounded to the nearest 10.

Notes:

'.' Indicates not applicable

'-' indicates not available - A breakdown of the main disabling condition for ESA claimants as at August 2009 has not been included in this analysis due to the incompleteness of the available information.

ESA was introduced for new claimants on 27 October 2008. The table shows that the ESA caseload has increased since that date, while the number of IB/SDA claimants has declined.

## Incapacity benefits for drugs misuse claimants

Table 2, shown below, gives information about the number of IB/SDA and ESA claimants who had drugs misuse recorded as their primary disabling condition at specific points in time between August 2007 and August 2013.

In August 2008, claimants of an incapacity benefit against whom a primary disabling condition of drugs misuse was recorded made up approximately 1.9% of all claimants entitled to those benefits. By August 2013, this percentage had fallen by 0.5 percentage points to 1.4%.

**Table 2 – IB/SDA and ESA claimants with a primary disabling condition of drugs misuse, Great Britain 2007 – 2013**

August	Number of benefit claimants with a primary disabling condition of drugs misuse in receipt of:			Total IB/SDA and ESA claimant population	Percentage of all IB/SDA and ESA claimants with a primary disabling condition of drugs misuse
	IB/SDA	ESA	IB/SDA or ESA		
2007	50,500	.	50,500	2,683,160	1.9%
2008	51,020	.	51,020	2,632,000	1.9%
2009	42,800	-	-	2,674,010	-
2010	37,480	9,870	47,350	2,646,540	1.8%
2011	33,040	10,620	43,650	2,619,680	1.7%
2012	18,050	20,610	38,660	2,552,350	1.5%
2013	6,330	27,880	34,210	2,473,420	1.4%

Source: 100% WPLS. All figures rounded to the nearest 10.

Notes:

'.' Indicates not applicable

'-' indicates not available - A breakdown of the main disabling condition for ESA claimants as at August 2009 has not been included in this analysis due to the incompleteness of the available information.

ESA was introduced for new claimants on 27 October 2008. The table shows that the ESA caseload has increased since that date, while the number of IB/SDA claimants has declined.

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