

DWP Statistical Summary of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Work Capability Assessment Statistics

25 October 2011

Summary

This is a summary of the official statistics produced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on Work Capability Assessment (WCA) figures relating to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) claims.

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) replaced Incapacity Benefit and Income Support paid on the grounds of incapacity for new claims from 27th October 2008. The introduction of ESA for new claimants in October 2008 was accompanied by a new assessment, the Work Capability Assessment (WCA). The WCA is based on advice delivered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) assessment services contractor, Atos Healthcare.

The headline figures are:

For all new ESA Claims from 27th October 2008 to 28th February 2011, the result of the initial WCA is as follows:

- Support Group – 7%
- Work Related Activity Group – 17%
- Fit for Work – 38%
- Claim closed before assessment complete – 36%
- Assessment still in progress – 2%

Differences from previous publications

These headline figures are very similar to those in the previous July 2011 publication – which included statistics on new claims up to the end of November 2010. The Fit for Work rate has fallen from 39% to 38%, whereas the proportions in the Support Group and the Work Related Activity Group have remained steady.

Background

The report presents monthly data on ESA claims and their subsequent WCA outcomes. ESA claimants begin the functional assessment process shortly after starting their claim. Atos Healthcare undertakes an assessment and following the assessment, their recommendation is passed on to DWP to

make a final decision on the claimant's ESA status. This will be one of the following:

- Entitled to ESA in the **Support Group** (for those with severe disabilities) – They receive ESA at a higher rate of benefit entitlement overall and exemption from mandatory work-related activity such as engagement with the Work Programme;
- Entitled to ESA in the **Work Related Activity Group** – They receive ESA at a higher rate of benefit than those on JSA and are mandated to engage with work-related activity such as the Work Programme; and
- **Fit for Work** so not entitled to ESA – The ESA claim is ceased but individuals can ask for a reconsideration or appeal if they disagree with the decision.

If someone is found Fit for Work by DWP they are no longer entitled to claim ESA. However, they may ask for a revision and/or they may appeal against the DWP decision. A large proportion of people claiming ESA cease their claim before assessment is complete (for example, if they have a short term health condition) and this is reflected in the figures presented in the statistical release.

Next Publication

The next publication is due on 24th January 2012.