

Benefit Claimants by equality strand in Wales

Highlights

- There are marked differences between different people with 'protected characteristics' who claim benefits in Wales.
- Women are more likely to claim lone parent benefits than men whereas men are more likely to claim job seekers and incapacity benefits than women. Women have been affected by changes to lone parent benefits and men have been affected by changes to incapacity benefits.
- People aged 55-59 have seen a reduction in the number claiming benefits on the grounds of incapacity whereas people aged 60-64 have been relatively unaffected. There has been a large increase in the proportion of younger people, aged under 25, claiming benefits – mainly as job seekers.
- There is very little data available on the ethnicity of claimants. What is available suggests that people of White origin are the vast majority of claimants and also comprise the large majority of the increased number of Job Seekers Allowance claimants. Although there are larger percentage increases amongst some minority ethnic groups the numbers are very small.
- There is very little data available on claimants and disability. What data is available relates only to disability benefits. These show that the main reason for claiming ESA and Incapacity Benefit is mental and behavioural conditions, whilst the main reason for claiming DLA is arthritis.
- There is no data on benefit claims by religion or by sexual orientation.
- There is no data for Wales on other benefits (such as housing benefit or council tax benefit) by any of the protected characteristics.

IMPORTANT NOTES ON THE DATA

This briefing uses the terminology used by the Department for Work and Pensions when referring to ethnic group, disability etc.

Data on gender and age is analysed by 'statistical group' which is the main reason for a claim rather than the benefit claimed. Data on ethnicity and disability is for individual benefit claimants.

'Protected characteristics' is a term used in the Equality Act 2010 and refers to people who are protected from unlawful discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation

Claimants by Gender

Men are slightly more likely to claim any DWP benefit than women – 19.8% of men of working age in Wales do so compared with 18.0% of women. Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Incapacity Benefits (IB) are the most commonly claimed benefits by both men and women, comprising 51.8% of claims by men and 42.1% of claims by women. Male claimants are much more likely than female claimants to claim Job Seekers' benefits (31.2% of male claims compared with 13.5% of female claims), whilst women claimants are more likely than men claimants to claim lone parent benefits – 16% of women claimants claim lone parent benefits compared with just 0.4% of men claimants (Table 1).

Table 1 Claimants of Working Age Benefits by Gender, Wales, February 2012

Benefit Group	Percentage of All Claims		Percentage of Population Claiming	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Job seeker	31.2	13.5	6.2	2.6
ESA and incapacity benefits	51.8	42.1	10.2	8.2
Lone parent	0.4	16.0	0.1	3.1
Carer	5.5	10.8	1.1	2.1
Others income related benefit	3.5	1.1	0.7	0.2
Disabled	7.1	7.1	1.4	1.4
Bereaved	0.4	1.7	0.1	0.3
All out-of-work benefits	86.9	72.7	17.2	14.1
Total	100	100	19.8	18.0

There have been some marked shifts in the number of benefit claims between November 2010 and November 2011 (Table 2). During this time, the number of male claimants increased by 3,050 and whilst the number of female claimants increased by 4,640. More than 7,000 fewer males claim ESA and Incapacity benefits than 15 months previously, whilst 9,000 more males claim job seekers' benefits. Amongst women, 2,530 fewer claimed lone parent benefits in February 2012 compared with November 2010, whilst 6,500 more claim job seekers' benefits.

Table 2 Change in Claimants of Working Age Benefits by Gender, Wales, November 2010 – February 2012

Benefit Group	Change in number of claimants	
	Male	Female
Job seekers' benefits	9,670	6,530
ESA and incapacity benefits	-7,160	-540
Lone parent	-160	-2,530
Carer	660	1,160
Other income related benefit	-680	-430
Disabled	730	560
Bereaved	10	-120
All out-of-work benefits	1,660	3,040
ALL BENEFITS	3,050	4,640

Claimants by Age

Older People

In Wales in February 2012, 2.5% of people aged 55-59 and 2.0% of people aged 60-64 claimed a benefit (84,730 people in total). This is a considerably lower proportion than amongst the population as a whole. The benefits most commonly claimed by older people are ESA and Incapacity benefits, accounting for 68% of claims by 55-59 year olds and 67% of those by 60-64 year olds – a much higher proportion than the population as a whole.

Table 3 Claimants of Working Age Benefits, Older People, Wales, February 2012

Benefit Group	Percentage of Claims		Percentage of Age Group Claiming	
	Aged 55-59	Aged 50-64	Aged 55-59	Aged 50-64
Job seeker	9.6	3.1	0.2	0.1
ESA and incapacity benefits	68.1	67.0	1.7	1.3
Lone parent	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Carer	10.7	7.3	0.3	0.1
Other income related benefit	0.4	15.5	0.0	0.3
Disabled	8.6	6.0	0.2	0.1
Bereaved	2.5	1.2	0.1	0.0
All out-of-work benefits	78.3	85.5	1.9	1.7
ALL BENEFITS	100	100	2.5	2.0

Since November 2010, the number of claimants aged 55-59 has decreased by 1,560 – entirely due to a reduction in the number of ESA and Incapacity benefits claimants. The number of claimants aged 60-64 has increased, with increases in job seeker, disabled and other benefits not being offset by any reduction in ESA and Incapacity benefits claims.

Table 4 Change in Number of Claimants of Working Age Benefits, Older People, Wales, November 2010 – February 2012

Statistical Group	Change in number of claimants Nov 2010-Feb 2012	
	Age Group	
	55-59	60-64
Job seeker	750	450
ESA and incapacity benefits	-2,150	60
Lone parent	-20	0
Carer	130	590
Others on income related benefit	-140	-230
Disabled	40	390
Bereaved	-180	210
All out-of-work benefits	-1,550	280
ALL BENEFITS	-1,560	1,470

Younger People

In Wales 3.1% of people aged under 25 claimed a benefit in February 2012 – a total of 59,140 people. A slightly higher proportion of young people claim compared with older people, although there are fewer young claimants. 48% of claimants claim a job seekers' benefit, 17.6% claim ESA and Incapacity benefits with a further 10.8% claiming other disability benefits, and 17.8% claim lone parent benefits (Table 5).

Table 5 Claimants of Working Age Benefits, Younger People, Wales, February 2012

	Percentage of Claims	Percentage of Population Claiming
Job seeker	48.0	1.5
ESA and incapacity benefits	17.6	0.5
Lone parent	17.8	0.6
Carer	2.7	0.1
Other income related benefit	3.0	0.1
Disabled	10.8	0.3
Bereaved		-
All out-of-work benefits	86.4	2.7
ALL BENEFITS	100	3.1

Over the 15 months to February 2012, the number of under-25 year old claimants increased by 5,640. This increase of nearly 11% is much larger than the increase in claims amongst the population as a whole. The increase was entirely amongst job seeker claimants, which more than offset decreases in ESA and incapacity benefit claims and in lone parent claims (Table 6).

Table 6 Change in the Number of Claimants of Working Age Benefits, Younger People, Wales, November 2010 – February 2012

Statistical Group	Change in number of claimants Nov 2010-11
Job seeker	6,420
ESA and incapacity benefits	-580
Lone parent	-30
Carer	100
Other income related benefit	-160
Disabled	440
Bereaved	0
All out-of-work benefits	5,640
ALL BENEFITS	6,190

Ethnicity of Claimants

Unfortunately the sources of data used to analyse claimants by gender and age are not available for analysis by ethnicity. Instead data on individual benefits must be used, of which there is ethnicity data only for JSA and ESA claimants. This data does not estimate the claimant rate.

Job Seekers' Allowance

In February 2012, 92.1% of claimants for JSA were White with 3.9% being non-White. The largest number of non-White claimants were Asian and Asian British, and Black and Black British, but these only accounted for 1.1% of claims each (740 and 720 claimants respectively).

Between November 2010 and February 2012, the number of JSA claimants increased by 16,200, all but 500 of which were made by claimants of White origin. Some ethnic groups recorded slightly higher percentage increases than the White group but the number of claimants is very small.

Table 7 Ethnicity of JobSeekers' Allowance Claimants, Wales, February 2012

Ethnic Group	February 2012		Change Nov. 2010 – Feb 2012	
	Number Of claimants ('000s)	Proportion of All JSA Claimants	Number ('000s)	% change
White	76.64	91.8	15.7	25.8
Mixed	0.68	0.8	0.16	30.8
Asian / Asian British	0.91	1.1	0.17	23.0
Black/ Black British	0.93	1.1	0.21	29.2
Chinese or other	0.7	0.8	0.19	37.3
Unknown / Prefer not to say	3.35	4.3	2.35	65.8
Total	83.21	100.0	8.43	12.58

Employment and Support Allowance

In February 2012, 75% of claimants for ESA were White, with the origin of more than a fifth of claimants being unknown. The largest number of non-White claimants were Asian and Asian British, but these only accounted for less than 1% of ESA claims.

Between November 2010 and February 2012, the number of ESA claimants increased by 56% (2,200 claims). About two-thirds of the increase was accounted for by claimants of White origin, with less than 2% of the increase being amongst non-White claimants.

Table 8 Ethnicity of Employment and Support Allowance Claimants, Wales, Feb. 2012

Ethnic Group	Claimants, Feb. 2012		Change Nov.2010-Feb. 2012	
	No. of Claimants ('000s)	Percentage of total	No. of Claimants ('000s)	Percentage Change
White	46.4	75.4	16.04	52.8
Mixed	0.27	0.4	0.1	58.8
Asian or Asian British	0.36	0.6	0.09	33.3
Black or Black British	0.26	0.4	0.08	44.4
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	0.3	0.5	0.12	66.7
Prefer Not to Say	3.84	6.2	1.38	56.1
Unknown	10.14	16.5	4.33	74.5
Total	61.57	100.0	22.13	56.1

Disability and Claimants

Unfortunately the sources of data used to analyse claimants by gender and age are not available for analysis by disability. The only benefits for which disability data is available are Employment and Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance. These data do not estimate the claimant rate.

Employment and Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance

In February 2012 there were a total of 177,930 claimants of ESA and IB/SDA in Wales. Of these, two out of three were on IB/SDA. For both benefits, the main reason for claiming were mental or behavioural disorders (accounting for just over four out of ten claims). This was followed by claims because of diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue (claimed by just over one in six people).

Table 9 Claimants of Employment & Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefits by Disease, Wales February 2012

Disease	Number of Claimants (000s)			Percentage of total
	ESA	IB/SDA	Total	
Mental and Behavioural Disorders	26.41	47.20	73.61	41.4
Diseases of the Nervous System	2.57	7.32	9.89	5.6
Diseases of the Circulatory or Respiratory System	3.69	8.28	11.97	6.7
Diseases of the Musculoskeletal system & Connective Tissue	9.45	22.47	31.92	17.9
Injury, Poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes	4.72	6.17	10.89	6.1
Other	14.73	24.93	39.66	22.3
TOTAL	61.57	116.36	177.93	100.0

Disability Living Allowance

In February 2012, a total of 243,620 people claimed Disability Living Allowance in Wales. Of these, nearly one in four (23.4%) claimed because they are disabled by arthritis. The next most common disabling condition is learning disability (8.8% of claims), followed by diseases of the muscles, bones and joints (6.2% of claims), and then by psychosis and psychoneurosis which account for 5.9% and 5.8% of claims respectively.

Data on the age and gender of claimants and their disabling condition is not available.

ANNEX

Cuts Watch Cymru is a coalition of third sector organisations investigating the impacts of welfare reforms on people living in Wales. Through talking to people affected by the changes, we seek to build a clearer picture about the impacts on different groups of people in different localities. This statistical briefing has been produced to give an overview of the characteristics of claimants across the main benefits, using the latest available data for Wales. In particular, it pays attention to possible issues in light of the welfare reforms. This will be a regular briefing which focuses on specific benefits that are subject to change, where data is available. The current briefing focuses on several of the major out-of-work benefits that are subject to change, which include:

Job Seeker's Allowance

Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) is a benefit for people who are either unemployed or work a limited number of hours, and are required to be available for work. There are two types of JSA:

- Contribution-based JSA – depends on an individual's National Insurance contribution record but is not affected by other income or capital, and
- Income-based JSA – is means-tested and dependent on income and capital.

For both JSA types, those aged under 25 receive a lower rate of payment. It is a condition of entitlement of JSA that a claimant must be willing and able to take up employment immediately. Recipients must be able to prove that they are actively seeking work.

Incapacity Benefit

Incapacity Benefit is paid to those who cannot work due to illness or disability. From January 2011 people were no longer able to make new claims for Incapacity Benefit, and have to claim Employment and Support Allowance instead. Current recipients of Incapacity Benefit, who are required to switch to Employment and Support Allowance, are currently being transferred, and this is expected to be complete by 2014. In order to be transferred over to the new benefit, people have to take the Work Capability Assessment, in order to determine their entitlement.

Employment and Support Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance provides financial support to those who are unable to work as a result of illness or impairment. After being assessed by the Work Capability Assessment, claimants are then placed into either the 'work-related activity group', or the 'support group'. Those in the 'work-related group' are expected to take part in work focused interviews to help them prepare for work. People in the support group are not expected to work due to the severity of their illness or impairment.

Income Support

Income Support is a means-tested benefit paid to people of working age who are on a low income, but who are not available for work, e.g. because they are lone parents or carers.

Disability Living Allowance

DLA provides a non-contributory, non means-tested and tax-free contribution towards the disability-related extra costs of severely disabled people up to the age of 65. It comprises a care element and a mobility element.

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