

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Our Ref: 2017-1115

11 May 2017

Dear Lee Jefferson,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 17 March 2017.

You asked:

“Thank you for the response. I am very familiar with the Freedom of Information Act but it seems my politeness clouded the request. From the information held on file, provide the number of bedridden claimants found fit to work since 2015.”

On 10 April 2017 you clarified:

“I'm asking you to kindly provide the number of bedridden claimants (that is claimants who suffer from a life threatening condition which prevents them from getting out of bed, including state of unconsciousness and coma) who have been found fit to work by the DWP since 2015 while in such a condition.

Please kindly provide the number of unconscious patients (including comatose patients) who have been found fit to work by the DWP since 2015 while in such a condition.”

We can confirm that we hold information falling within the description specified in your request. However, we estimate that the cost of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate limit for central Government, set by regulations at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act the Department is not therefore obliged to comply with your request and we will not be processing it further. Under section 16 of the Act we should assist the requester in helping narrow their request so that it may fall beneath the cost limit. Once you have reviewed the information below you may wish to narrow your request accordingly. We will consider afresh any revised request however we cannot guarantee that any revised request will fall within the cost limit.

The Department publishes Official Statistics on Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Work Capability Assessments (WCAs) and information on these statistics can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/employment-and-support-allowance-outcomes-of-work-capability-assessment>

The latest set of Official Statistics was released on 9 March 2017 and covers WCA outcomes for ESA claims made to June 2016, and appeal outcomes to December 2015. A summary of this data can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/esa-outcomes-of-work-capability-assessments-including-mandatory-reconsiderations-and-appeals-march-2017>

The health condition recorded for an ESA claimant in our datasets is based on evidence of the claimant's primary health condition provided at the start of the claim. It may not represent a claimant's most recent condition and so may not reflect their condition during their assessment. Please also note that where someone has more than one diagnosis or disabling condition only the predominant one is used. Having a health condition does not in itself confer entitlement to ESA; the decision on entitlement is based on consideration of all available evidence on the impact of a claimant's disability or health condition on their ability to carry out a range of activities related to physical and mental function, assessed by the WCA.

You have asked for both those who "suffer from a life threatening condition which prevents them from getting out of bed, including state of unconsciousness and coma" and "the number of unconscious patients (including comatose patients)". Please specify which health conditions you consider appropriate to your request and provide a suitable time period.

All health conditions are coded on DWP systems using the high level "block" codes, consisting of a letter and two numbers in the range A00 to Z99, of the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Edition, published by the World Health Organisation.

<http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2016/en>.

Please note that we are not able to break this data down to the four-character subcategories specified by the codes using decimal points.

As explained above, should you narrow your request we will consider afresh any revised request. However we cannot guarantee that any revised request will fall within the cost limit.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact us quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol Team

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk or by writing to DWP, Central Fol Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF <https://ico.org.uk/>