

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: [freedom-of-information-rexxxxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx](mailto:freedom-of-information-rexxxxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx)

Our Ref: Fol 3210

DATE: 31 August 2012

Dear Mr Kelly,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information Request of 18 August 2012. You asked:

*Dear Department for Work and Pensions, can you tell me when the conversion to ESA will be complete in the Cheshire area? And the figures (amount) of people who where on Incapacity Benefit for more than two years and are now found fit for work following a review or medical up to the 18th aug 2012 since the inception of the changeover.*

In October 2008, existing benefits paid on grounds of incapacity and disability, that is Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) and Income Support (IS) on the grounds of incapacity, were replaced with Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) for all new claimants.

Since October 2010, most claimants who receive IB, SDA and IS paid on the grounds of illness or disability are being assessed to see if they qualify for ESA. The reassessment commenced with a trial in the Aberdeen and Burnley areas in October 2010. These trials provided an indication of claimant and staff reactions to the reassessment process and have been used to inform the national roll-out. This started with a limited introductory phase at the end of February 2011 and reached full scale in April 2011.

According to current plans the reassessment of incapacity benefits claimants for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) is expected to be completed in spring 2014 everywhere in Great Britain.

On 14 May 2012 the Department for Work and Pensions published information on the reassessment of incapacity benefits claimants for ESA by duration of their previous incapacity benefits claim for all reassessments starting between October 2010 and July 2011. Decisions made on these claims up until February 2012 are included in these statistics. The publication can be found at the following link:

[http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc\\_analysis/2012/esa\\_ibr\\_outcomes\\_of\\_wca\\_time\\_breakdown.pdf](http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2012/esa_ibr_outcomes_of_wca_time_breakdown.pdf)

In this publication the duration on benefit is shown in five-year intervals, i.e. benefit duration of 5 years or less, more than 5 years and less than 10 year, more than 10 years and less than 15 years, and more than 15 years. The duration on benefit can be expected to be more than two years for all claimants undergoing reassessment, as no new claims for incapacity benefits have been accepted following the introduction of ESA in October 2008.

The information quoted above is the latest information available. The Department plans to publish more recent information on the reassessment of incapacity benefits claimants for ESA during autumn 2012.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol Team

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#### **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@dwpgsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.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 [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)