

21 May 2015

Dear Michael Race,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 27 April 2015.

You asked:

**“Can I find out the number of people on benefits in Oxford who cite alcohol related issues as a reason for being on benefits and not be able to work.**

**I would like the figures for this for the last five years, including the figures for 2015.**

**I would like the figures for each year broken down into each year.”**

There are several out-of-work disability benefits which record the primary medical condition of the claimant and the relevant information for these benefits is recorded as “alcohol misuse”. In response to your query information in respect of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Incapacity Benefit/Severe Disablement Allowance (IB/SDA) is shown in the table below.

Please note that the medical condition recorded on a benefit claim form does not itself confer entitlement to IB/SDA or ESA. So, for example, a decision on entitlement for a customer claiming on the basis of alcohol misuse would be based on their ability to carry out the range of activities related to physical and mental function, assessed by the Personal/Work Capability Assessment.

**Number of ESA and IB/SDA claimants with a primary medical condition of “alcohol misuse” in Oxford local authority: November 2010 – November 2014**

Benefit	Nov 2010	Nov 2011	Nov 2012	Nov 2013	Nov 2014
ESA	40	50	110	140	160
IB/SDA	150	130	50	10	10

**Source:** DWP 100% WPLS.

**Notes:**

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
2. Data for ESA and IB/SDA is at November in each year 2010 to 2014, which is the latest data available at the time of the request.
3. The information provided is for Oxford local authority area.

4. Causes of incapacity are based on the International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision, published by the World Health Organisation.
5. The medical condition recorded on a benefit claim form does not itself confer entitlement to IB/SDA or ESA. So, for example, a decision on entitlement for a customer claiming on the basis of alcohol misuse would be based on their ability to carry out the range of activities related to physical and mental function, assessed by the Personal/Work Capability Assessment
6. Medical condition is based on evidence provided at the start of the claim and may not represent a claimant's most recent medical condition. Where someone has more than one diagnosis or disabling condition only the predominant one is used.
7. ESA replaced IB/SDA for new claims from 27 October 2008.

As the statistics for 2015 are intended for future publication this information is exempt from disclosure under the terms of Section 22 (Information intended for future publication) of the FOIA. This exemption is qualified, and is therefore subject to a public interest test where the Department considers whether the balance of the public interest falls in favour of withholding or disclosing the information requested.

Whilst disclosure would improve transparency in the operations of the Department, it is in the public interest to adhere to the existing publication process for official statistics to ensure that the publication of official information is a properly planned and managed process and that the data are accurate once placed into the public domain. It is also in the public interest to ensure that the information is available to all members of the public at the same time and premature publication could undermine this principle.

On this occasion, the balance of the public interest test falls in favour of withholding this information. As explained above, statistics for 2015 will be published in due course.

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

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central FoI 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@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) or by writing to DWP, Central FoI 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)