

Evaluation of Changes for Cancer Patients

Key points:

- Following the changes to the treatment of cancer patients in the Work Capability Assessment (WCA), there was an immediate increase in the proportion of claimants with a form of cancer as their primary condition being placed in the Support Group (SG) [Table 4].
- This increase started in the first quarter following the introduction of the policy change in January 2013. This is matched by a fall in the proportions being assigned to both the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) and being found Fit for Work (FFW).
- There was no equivalent increase in SG outcomes in the first quarter following the change for claimants whose primary condition was not cancer [Table 5].
- Following the impact of the reforms, there was no significant change in the way in which cancer patients were assigned to the SG beyond any changes that occurred to all groups [Table 7].
- The proportion of people with cancer as their primary condition being assigned to the WRAG through being 'treated as Limited Capability for Work (LCW)' fell by 4 percentage points after the reform, compared to an increase of 5 percentage points for people with a primary condition other than cancer (Table 8)
- There were no significant changes to the rates of Decision Maker (DM) disagreement with Healthcare Professional recommendations or overturns of DWP decisions at appeal for cancer patients as a result of the policy change.

Caveats:

1. In the 'Volumes completed' and 'Final Outcome' sections, three categories are included: people with a primary condition other than cancer, people whose primary condition is a type of cancer, and people whose primary condition is recorded as a growth which could be benign or could be malignant. As can be seen in the 'Volumes' section, there are very few cases in this third group. In all other sections, claimants for whom the diagnosis of the growth in question is uncertain have been grouped under 'all claimants except for people with cancer as their primary condition' and not as 'people with cancer'.
2. Also note that the recorded primary condition of claimants may not always correctly identify the main cause of their claim. DWP staff, rather than medical professionals, put this information on the system and only have access to the information provided by a claimant's GP. They must also make a judgment about which of the conditions mentioned is a claimant's primary condition.
3. Percentages are rounded throughout and therefore may not sum to 100. Raw figures are rounded to the nearest 100.

4. 'Pre-policy change' referred to in Tables 7-13 relates to the period 1st Jan 2011 – 27th Jan 2013. 'Post-policy change' relates to the period 28th Jan 2013 – 30th June 2014.
5. Figures provided relate to outcomes of initial WCAs only.

Volumes completed

Table 1: Volumes of completed WCAs by quarter

Quarter	Primary condition other than cancer	Primary condition is growth which could be cancerous	Primary condition is cancer
Nov-10 to Jan-11	99,100	400	3,700
Feb-11 to April-11	108,100	400	4,000
May-11 to July-11	91,000	400	3,700
August-11 to Oct-11	58,500	400	3,600
Nov-11 to Jan-12	77,400	400	4,000
Feb-12 to April-12	100,300	400	3,700
May-12 to July-12	97,500	400	3,900
August-12 to Oct-12	113,200	400	4,700
Nov-12 to Jan-13	109,900	400	4,100
Feb-13 to April-13	100,500	400	3,900
May-13 to July-13	85,100	300	3,400
August-13 to Oct-13	48,300	300	2,800
November-13 to Jan-14	57,500	300	3,100
Feb-14 to April-14	60,400	300	3,700
May-14 to July-14	69,300	400	4,100
All	1,276,100	5,700	56,300

Table 2: Volume of completed WCAs by quarter for people with a physical condition as their primary condition

Quarter	Physical condition
Nov-10 to Jan-11	62,100
Feb-11 to April-11	68,400
May-11 to July-11	56,300
August-11 to Oct-11	37,200
Nov-11 to Jan-12	49,600
Feb-12 to April-12	62,900
May-12 to July-12	60,700
August-12 to Oct-12	70,600
Nov-12 to Jan-13	66,500
Feb-13 to April-13	61,000
May-13 to July-13	50,600
August-13 to Oct-13	28,500
November-13 to Jan-14	32,600
Feb-14 to April-14	34,800
May-14 to July-14	40,100
All	781,900

Pre-appeal Outcomes

Table 3: Pre-appeal initial WCA outcomes for people with a physical condition

Quarter	%		
	Support Group	Work Related Activity Group	Fit for Work
Nov-10 to Jan-11	13	32	55
Feb-11 to April-11	13	31	56
May-11 to July-11	19	24	57
August-11 to Oct-11	32	21	47
Nov-11 to Jan-12	28	20	51
Feb-12 to April-12	22	20	58
May-12 to July-12	24	22	54
August-12 to Oct-12	27	22	51
Nov-12 to Jan-13	27	24	49
Feb-13 to April-13	29	22	49
May-13 to July-13	31	22	46
August-13 to Oct-13	47	19	34
November-13 to Jan-14	49	18	33
Feb-14 to April-14	47	17	36
May-14 to July-14	50	17	33

Table 4: Pre-appeal initial WCA outcomes for cancer patients

Quarter	%		
	Support Group	Work Related Activity Group	Fit for Work
Nov-10 to Jan-11	69	18	13
Feb-11 to April-11	69	18	13
May-11 to July-11	78	13	9
August-11 to Oct-11	85	10	5
Nov-11 to Jan-12	83	10	6
Feb-12 to April-12	80	11	9
May-12 to July-12	81	12	8
August-12 to Oct-12	82	12	6
Nov-12 to Jan-13	83	11	6
Feb-13 to April-13	91	5	4
May-13 to July-13	94	3	3
August-13 to Oct-13	97	2	1
November-13 to Jan-14	96	2	2
Feb-14 to April-14	97	2	1
May-14 to July-14	96	2	2

Note: Changes to WCA for cancer patients were introduced in January 2013. The data post-change are shown in black and before in grey.

Table 5: Pre-appeal initial WCA outcomes for all claimants except for those with cancer as their primary condition

Quarter	%		
	Support Group	Work Related Activity Group	Fit for Work
Nov-10 to Jan-11	9	32	59
Feb-11 to April-11	10	32	58
May-11 to July-11	16	25	59
August-11 to Oct-11	28	23	49
Nov-11 to Jan-12	25	22	53
Feb-12 to April-12	20	22	58
May-12 to July-12	22	24	54
August-12 to Oct-12	25	23	51
Nov-12 to Jan-13	26	25	49
Feb-13 to April-13	26	24	50
May-13 to July-13	30	24	46
August-13 to Oct-13	47	20	33
November-13 to Jan-14	50	18	32
Feb-14 to April-14	47	18	35
May-14 to July-14	50	17	33

Table 6: Pre-appeal initial WCA outcomes for all claimants

Quarter	%		
	Support Group	Work Related Activity Group	Fit for Work
Nov-10 to Jan-11	12	31	57
Feb-11 to April-11	12	31	57
May-11 to July-11	18	25	57
August-11 to Oct-11	31	22	47
Nov-11 to Jan-12	28	21	51
Feb-12 to April-12	22	22	56
May-12 to July-12	24	23	52
August-12 to Oct-12	27	23	49
Nov-12 to Jan-13	28	24	48
Feb-13 to April-13	29	23	48
May-13 to July-13	32	23	44
August-13 to Oct-13	50	19	32
November-13 to Jan-14	52	18	31
Feb-14 to April-14	50	17	33
May-14 to July-14	53	16	31

Note: Changes to WCA for cancer patients were introduced in January 2013. The data post-change are shown in black and before in grey.

How decisions were made (Paper-based, face-to-face, treat as LCW)

Table 7: How Support Group decisions were made

		Support Group		
		%		
		Face to Face	Paper based	Treat as LCW
Physical condition	Pre-policy change	33%	66%	1%
	Post-policy change	31%	68%	0%
Everyone excluding cancer patients	Pre-policy change	43%	56%	1%
	Post-policy change	41%	59%	0%
Cancer patients	Pre-policy change	6%	94%	1%
	Post-policy change	3%	97%	0%
All	Pre-policy change	38%	61%	1%
	Post-policy change	37%	63%	0%

Note: Regulations allow certain cases to be treated as having limited capability for work without the WCA descriptors being applied to them. These cases are those in the 'Treat as LCW' category. Cases covered by these regulations include: hospital patients, people receiving certain regular treatments, people in education.

Table 8: How Work Related Activity Group decisions were made

		Work Related Activity Group		
		%		
		Face to Face	Paper Based	Treat as LCW
Physical condition	Pre-policy change	81%	0%	19%
	Post-policy change	73%	0%	26%
Everyone excluding cancer patients	Pre-policy change	88%	0%	12%
	Post-policy change	83%	0%	17%
Cancer patients	Pre-policy change	36%	2%	63%
	Post-policy change	38%	2%	59%
All	Pre-policy change	87%	0%	12%
	Post-policy change	83%	0%	17%

Final Outcome

Table 9: Stage at which final outcome of WCA is first decided

		Stage at which final outcome is first decided		
		HCP recommendation	DWP DM decision	Appeal
		%		
Primary condition other than cancer	Pre-policy change	82	10	8
	Post-policy change	84	12	4
Primary condition is growth which could be cancerous	Pre-policy change	90	7	3
	Post-policy change	94	6	1
Primary condition is cancer	Pre-policy change	95	4	1
	Post-policy change	95	4	0
All	Pre-policy change	83	10	7
	Post-policy change	85	12	4

Note: The percentages in the 'DWP DM decision' and 'Appeal' columns show the percentage of decisions that were changed to their final outcome at that particular stage. E.g. the Healthcare Professional recommends a claimant is placed in the WRAG but a DWP DM decides the evidence supports a FFW decision. The claimant then appeals but the DWP decision is upheld. This will show in Table 9 in 'DWP DM decision', as this is the stage at which the final outcome was first decided, not at appeal.

Table 10: Outcome of FFW recommendations made by Healthcare Professional after DWP DM stage

		FFW to FFW	FFW to SG	FFW to WRAG
Physical condition	Pre-policy change	88%	2%	10%
	Post-policy change	79%	4%	17%
Primary condition other than cancer	Pre-policy change	87%	2%	11%
	Post-policy change	80%	3%	17%
Primary condition is growth which could be cancerous	Pre-policy change	74%	8%	19%
	Post-policy change	68%	4%	28%
Primary condition is cancer	Pre-policy change	77%	8%	15%
	Post-policy change	69%	10%	20%
All	Pre-policy change	87%	2%	11%
	Post-policy change	80%	3%	17%

Table 11: Outcome of WRAG recommendations by Healthcare Professional after DWP DM stage

		WRAG to FFW	WRAG to SG	WRAG to WRAG
Physical condition	Pre-policy change	0%	3%	97%
	Post-policy change	0%	4%	96%
Primary condition other than cancer	Pre-policy change	0%	3%	97%
	Post-policy change	0%	4%	96%
Primary condition is growth which could be cancerous	Pre-policy change	0%	6%	94%
	Post-policy change	0%	6%	94%
Primary condition is cancer	Pre-policy change	0%	7%	93%
	Post-policy change	0%	9%	91%
All	Pre-policy change	0%	3%	97%
	Post-policy change	0%	4%	96%

Outcome of SG recommendations by Healthcare Professional after DWP DM stage

DWP decision makers disagreed with very few SG recommendations by Healthcare Professionals in each category. When rounded to the nearest percentage point, the proportions moving from SG to WRAG and from SG to FFW were 0%.

Table 12: Outcomes of FFW decisions made by DWP DM after appeal stage

		FFW to FFW	FFW to SG	FFW to WRAG
Physical condition	Pre-policy change	87%	2%	11%
	Post-policy change	91%	2%	8%
Primary condition other than cancer	Pre-policy change	86%	1%	13%
	Post-policy change	90%	2%	9%
Primary condition is growth which could be cancerous	Pre-policy change	82%	3%	15%
	Post-policy change	90%	0%	10%
Primary condition is cancer	Pre-policy change	88%	2%	10%
	Post-policy change	90%	2%	8%
All	Pre-policy change	86%	1%	13%
	Post-policy change	90%	2%	9%

Note: These cases did not necessarily go to appeal. The table simply shows the distribution of outcomes that were decided as FFW by a DWP DM after some of these decisions have been appealed. A FFW decision made by DWP DM that was not appealed would therefore be shown in Table 12 as 'FFW to FFW'.

Table 13: Outcomes of WRAG decisions made by DWP DM after appeal stage

		WRAG to SG	WRAG to WRAG
Physical condition	Pre-policy change	400	119,300
	Post-policy change	100	51,900
Primary condition other than cancer	Pre-policy change	700	202,400
	Post-policy change	200	95,600
Primary condition is growth which could be cancerous	Pre-policy change	0*	700
	Post-policy change	0*	200
Primary condition is cancer	Pre-policy change	0*	4,100
	Post-policy change	0	600
All	Pre-policy change	700	207,100
	Post-policy change	200	96,400

*Rounded to 0

Very few WRAG decision made by DWP DM are appealed. The numbers moving from the WRAG to the SG after appeal are therefore very limited and therefore round to 0% for all categories. The table has therefore been left with the raw volumes for comparison.