

From: Donna O'Brien
To: Authority Enquiries
Date: 17/02/2014

Subject: Advice on a complaint regarding Department of Work and Pensions

Dear Statistics Casework Team,

I wish to gain your advice on whether to lodge a formal complaint to the UK Statistics Authority over the use of statistics in two recent Department of Work and Pensions press releases, regarding a new disability benefit Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in two departmental press releases

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/personal-independence-payment-rolls-out-to-existing-claimants-in-scotland>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/personal-independence-payment-rolls-out-to-existing-claimants-in-northern-england>

the DWP has used statistics on Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to justify the change to the new benefit PIP.

Under the current system of DLA, 71% of claimants get indefinite awards without systematic reassessments.

And more than 50% of decisions on entitlement are made on the basis of the claim form alone, without any additional corroborating medical evidence.

However, I could find no link to the sources of these statistics in the press release. When I made an inquiry to the DWP on the source of the 50% of decisions statistic in particular, I was directed the following source of evidence (Table 1).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-use-and-claim-duration-dla-claimants-aged-16-to-64-201213>

Yet it appears to me that the Table contradicts that statistic.

Table 1: Main Source of Evidence Used in DLA New Claim Decisions, 2012/13	Claim form	GP report	Med exam	Other source of evidence (Other Sources of Evidence include phone calls to the claimant or their Carer, the claimant's Personal Care Support Plan, information from a Social Worker, or from an Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist or other Allied Health Professional, a Hospital report or information obtained as part of the claimant's application for Employment and Support Allowance.)
Percentage of New Claim Decisions, 2012/13	10%	40%	6%	45%

The implication from the press release is that more than half of DLA claimants are able to easily access a benefit without evidence to back up their claim, when it appears that actually the figure is not traceable to any official DWP statistics and indeed in over 90% claims additional corroborating evidence is treated as the main source of evidence, other than the form.

I would welcome your advice on how best to pursue a complaint about the use of statistics in these press statements.

Yours sincerely,

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