
Siobhan Tuohy-Smith, Head of Casework

Steve Ellerd-Elliott
Chief Statistician
Department for Work and Pensions
(by email)

24 August 2022

Dear Steve,

Universal Credit Work Capability Assessment Statistics

I'm very grateful to you for setting out the current position and acknowledge DWP's diligence in producing high quality statistics that illuminate so many areas of the social protections offered in the UK. The current statistics on [Employment and Support Allowance \(ESA\) Work Capability Assessments \(WCA\)](#) are an example in this area. These statistics have been used widely and are of significant public interest.

However, as noted in our [previous letter](#), since the transition to Universal Credit in 2018, most new claimants are not included in the ESA WCA statistics as ESA and Universal Credit claimants are in separate systems. The lack of Universal Credit WCA statistics leaves a gap in the information available on workplace capability assessments. It is disappointing that, due to circumstances beyond your control, the Department is tolerating this significant data gap. It would be helpful if you could set out, by reply, how the Department proposes to be clear in its publications about this gap to ensure that users are aware and can understand its impact on use.

In your letter you set out how, once the scenario for the Department's resources becomes clearer, you will start your process to assess whether Universal Credit WCA statistics may be produced. I would urge that these internal processes are progressed expeditiously taking into account the wealth of evidence around the need for transparency around Universal Credit WCA statistics. I would hope that internal Management Information on WCAs should also act as an excellent source for the statistics should your review conclude that they will be produced.

If I can in any way help or advise you going forward do get in touch. We also look forward to hearing your plans for communicating the current data gap to users. I have copied this letter to Peter Schofield, DWP Permanent Secretary.

Yours sincerely,

Siobhan Tuohy-Smith
Head of Casework