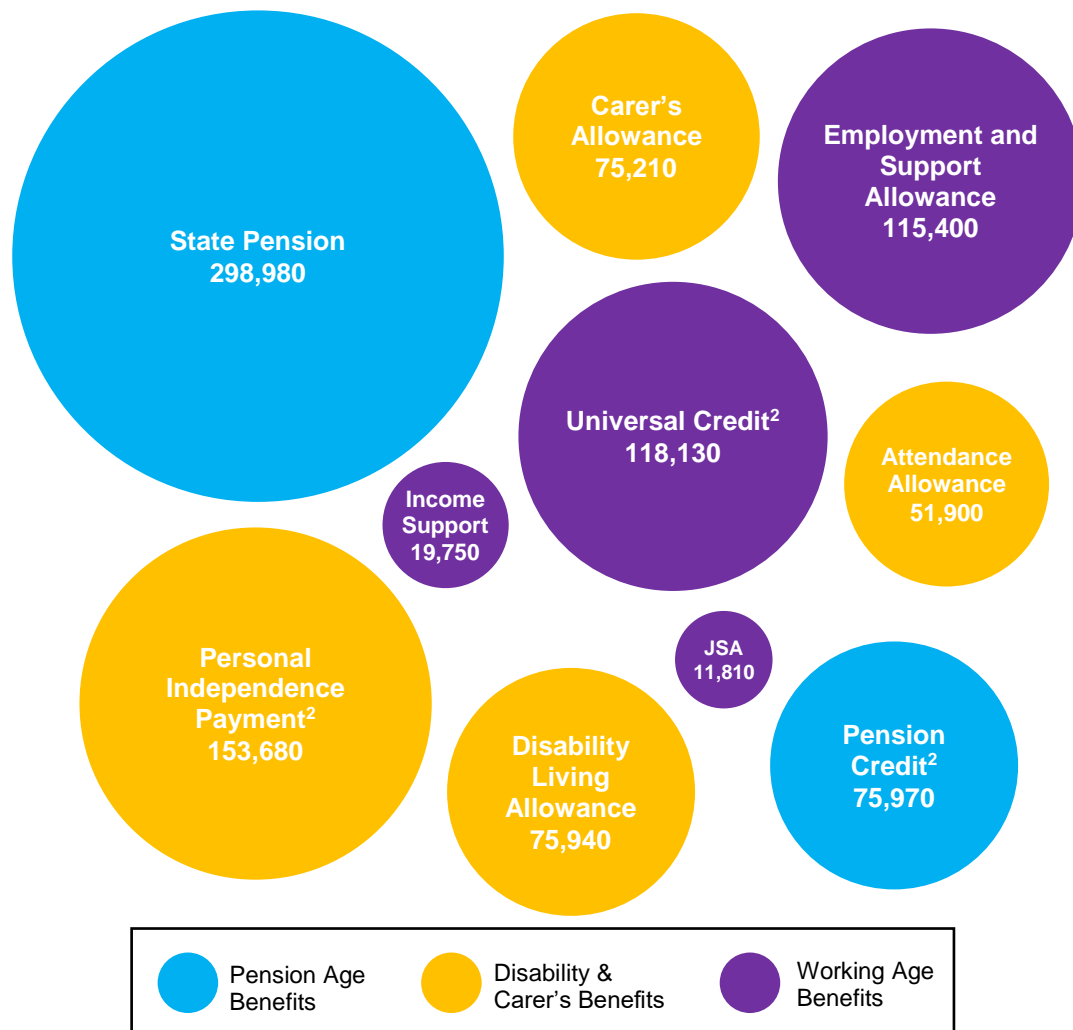


Northern Ireland Benefits Statistics Summary February 2021

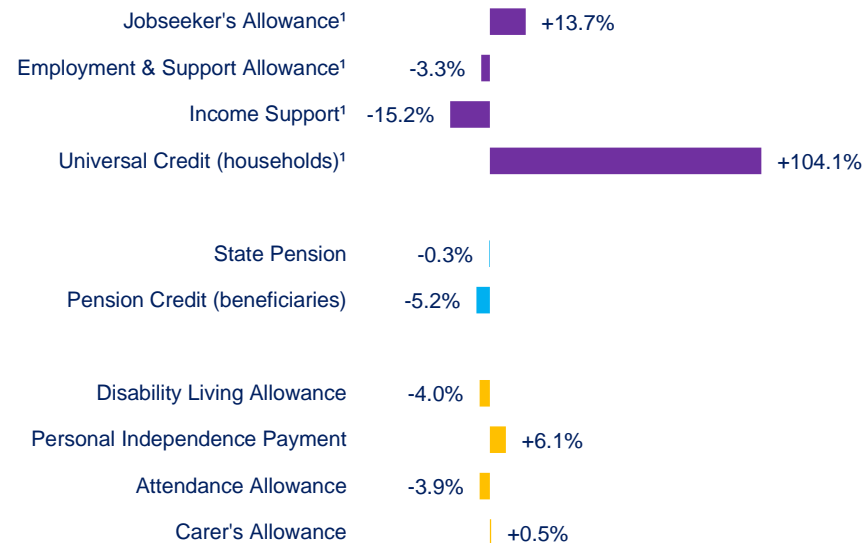
Quarterly Coverage: Northern Ireland Published: 26th May 2021 by Professional Services Unit (Department for Communities)

The NI Benefits Statistics Summary provides an up to date and concise overview of the benefits administered by DfC. Additional benefits statistics are available [here](#).

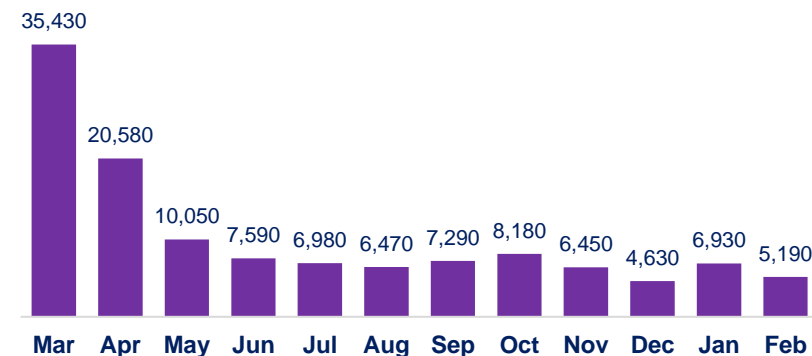
Claimants of Key Benefits – February 2021



Annual Percentage Change in Claimant Numbers



New Claims² to Universal Credit



¹ With the introduction of Universal Credit (UC), there will be no new claimants to Income-based JSA, Income-related ESA and Income Support. UC was rolled out on a phased geographical basis from September 2017 to December 2018.

² Figures typically refer to claimants although Personal Independence Payment figures refer to claims in payment, Pension Credit refers to beneficiaries (claimants and partners) and Universal Credit refers to households.

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What you need to know

The Department for Communities (DfC) publishes the Benefits Statistics Summary Bulletin each quarter. The DfC Benefit Statistics Summary brings together key statistics on the main DfC administered benefits.

Detailed **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** and **Universal Credit (UC)** statistics are published in separate publications, available [here](#).

Housing Benefit statistics are published in a separate publication. Housing statistics can be found [here](#).

Note: The “Client Group Analysis” series of statistics has been suspended until further notice. These statistics will be resumed once a method of incorporating Universal Credit data into the analysis has been assessed as suitably robust.

Data notes

Figures are rounded to the nearest ten to protect individual records and some additional disclosure control has also been applied - figures are only slightly affected by these procedures. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Time series are presented as a 5-year rolling period. Older figures are available on request.

Additional tables and data

In addition to the summary document, there are a large number of tables which enable the user to examine in further detail each benefit. These are provided to the user as:

- Supplementary benefit statistics tables – for each Benefit Statistics Summary release, Excel spreadsheets are produced containing a large number of tables with much more detailed breakdowns for each benefit:
<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/benefits-statistics>
- Jobseeker Statistics for Northern Ireland statistics are available via NOMIS:
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/Default.asp>
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) statistics are available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions>
- Geographic statistics are available on NINIS: <http://www.ninis.nisra.gov.uk/>

Further information on individual benefits including eligibility criteria is available from NI Direct:
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/money-tax-and-benefits/benefits-and-financial-support>

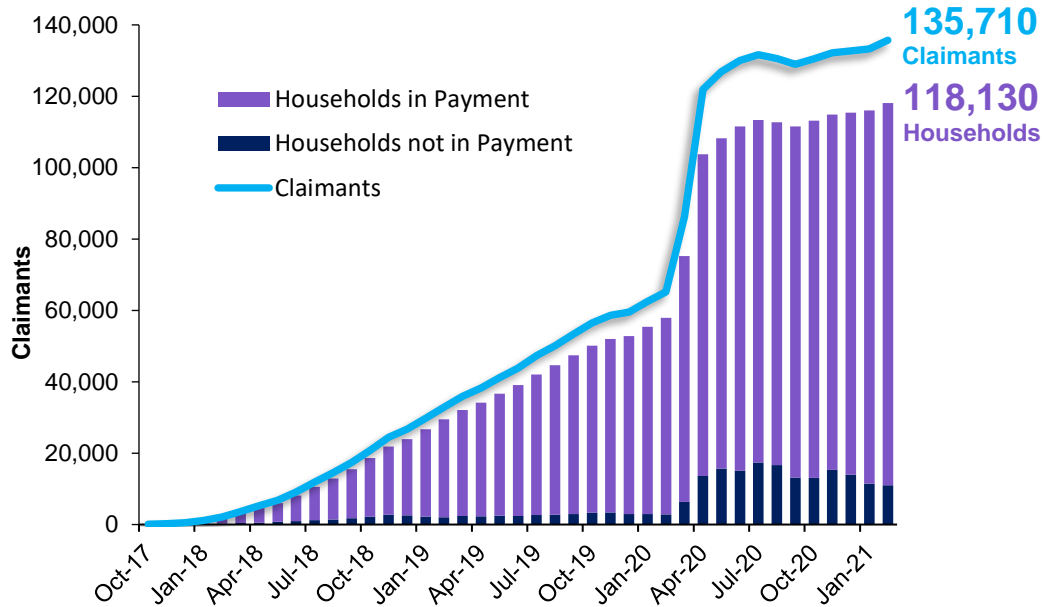
About these statistics

All of the statistics in this report are National Statistics except Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment statistics. These are designated as Experimental Statistics.

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. See Note 2 for further information.

Universal Credit – Experimental Statistics

Universal Credit Households & Claimants: October 2017 – February 2021

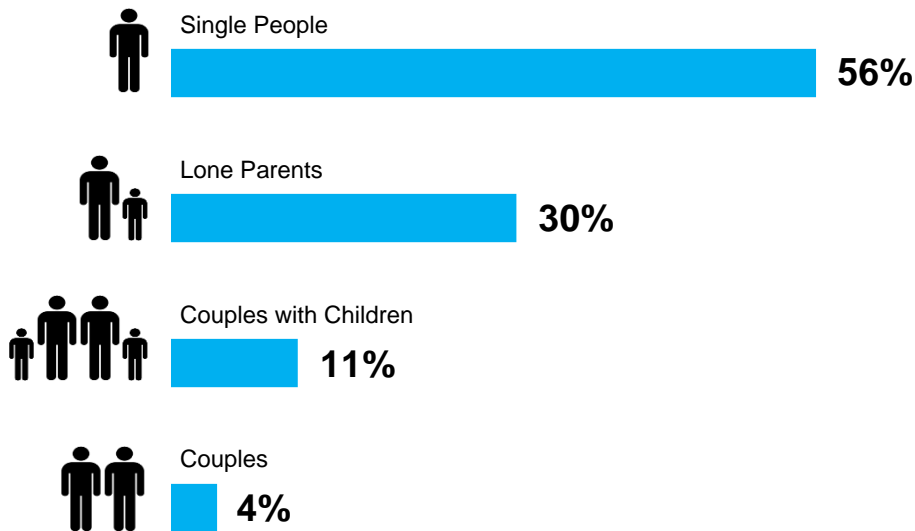


Key Facts

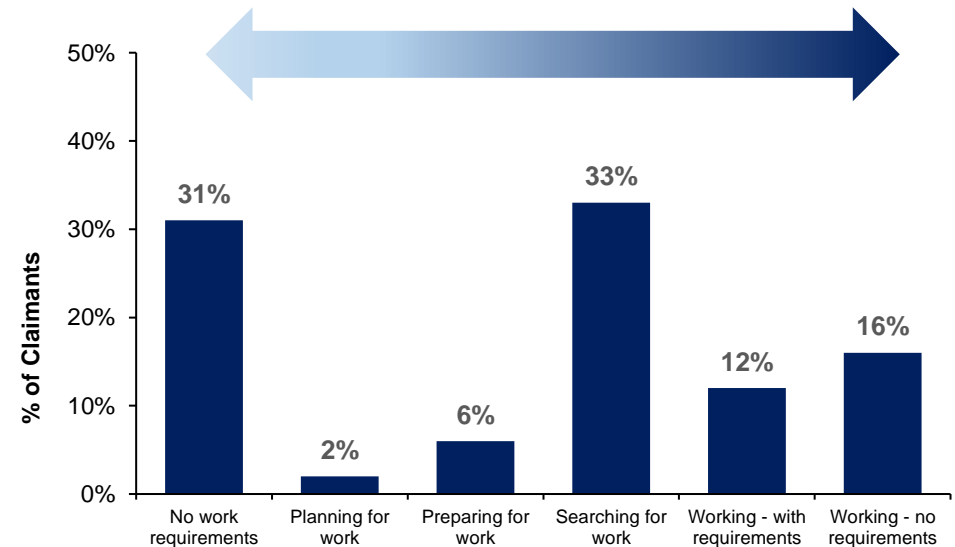
Universal Credit was introduced on a phased geographical basis from September 2017 to December 2018.

- The number of households on Universal Credit rose from 114,840 in November 2020 to 118,130 in February 2021. The number of claimants reached 135,710.
- Of the 135,710 claimants on Universal Credit, 33% (45,230) were in the “searching for work” conditionality regime.
- The majority of households (107,110) were in paid receipt of Universal Credit.
- 56% (59,780) of Universal Credit households in payment were single people without children and 30% (31,740) were lone parents.
- The average amount of Universal Credit paid to the 107,110 households in payment was £720 per month.
- See [Universal Credit publication](#) for further information.

Structure of Households in Payment – February 2021



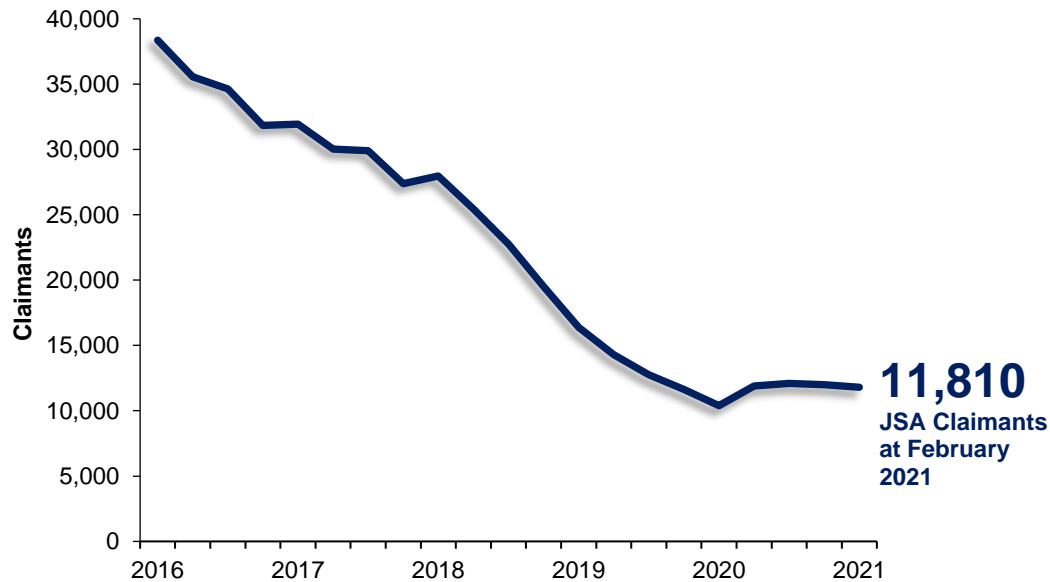
Universal Credit Claimants by Conditionality Regime – February 2021



* See Note 6 on page 12 for further information on conditionality regimes.

Jobseeker's Allowance – National Statistics

Jobseeker's Allowance Claimants: February 2016 – February 2021

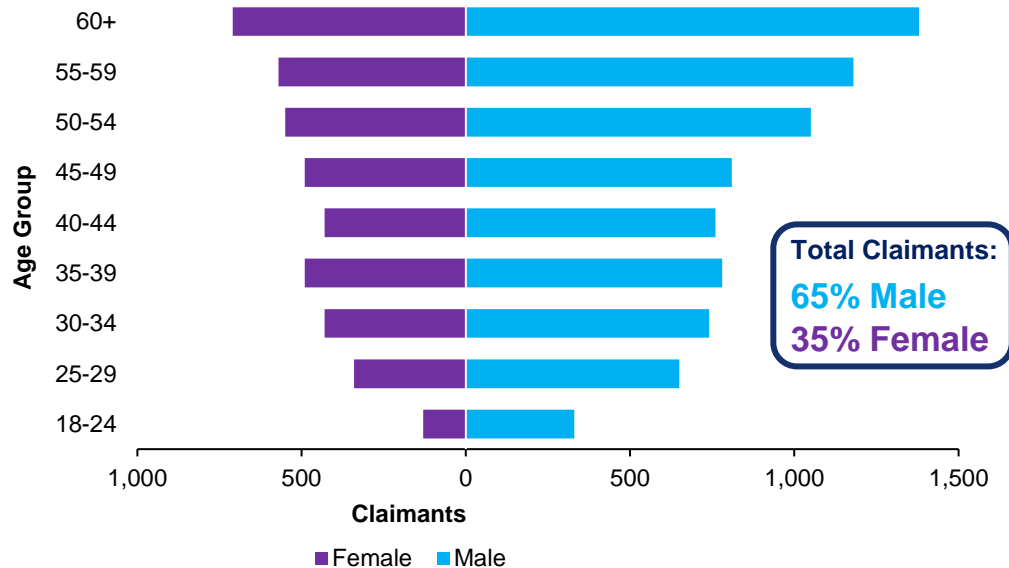


Key Facts

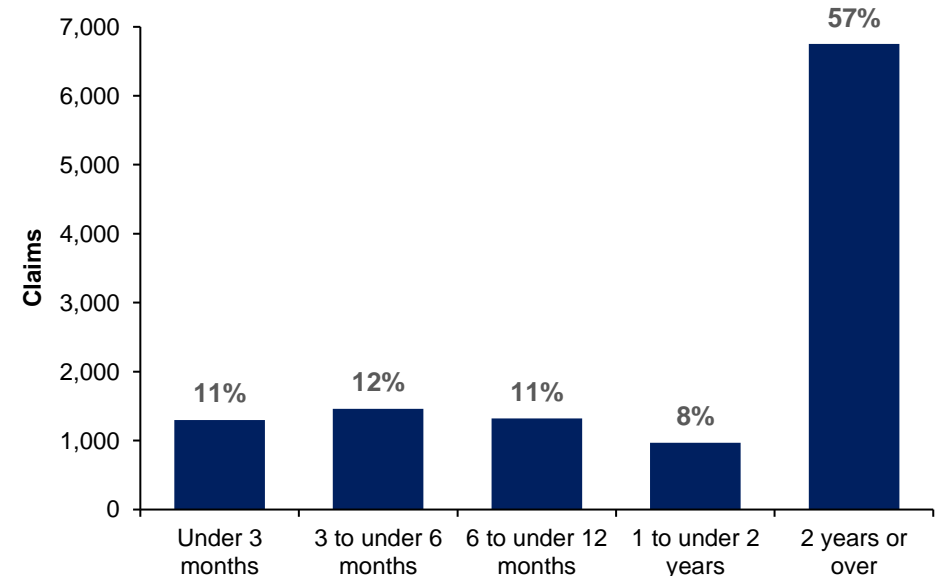
The official source of statistics for unemployment related benefits is the experimental Claimant Count, which includes Jobseeker's Allowance claimants and out-of-work Universal Credit claimants who are claiming principally for the reason of being unemployed. Details can be found [here](#). The DfC JSA figures are presented here to enable cross-benefit analysis and provide a wider range of breakdowns.

- **With the introduction of Universal Credit, there will be no new claimants to Income-based JSA. However claims can still be made to New Style JSA, depending on claimants' National Insurance contributions.**
- **At February 2021, there were 11,810 claimants of Jobseeker's Allowance.** This represents an increase of 13.7% (1,420) on a year earlier and a decrease of 1.5% (180) since November 2020. The decreasing trend is largely due to the introduction of Universal Credit (UC) and the recent rise in claimants can be attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 57% (6,750) of JSA claims had a duration of 2 years or longer.
- The average weekly Jobseeker's Allowance benefit payment was £79.89.
- See [supplementary tables](#) for further information.

Jobseeker's Allowance Claimants by Age and Gender

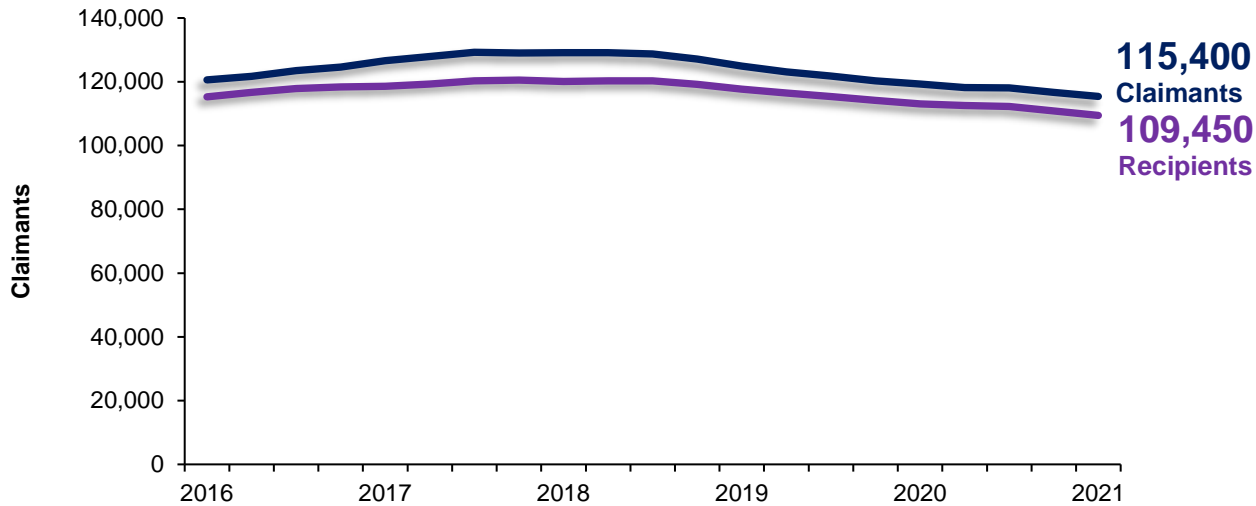


Jobseeker's Allowance Claims by Duration of Claim



Employment and Support Allowance – National Statistics

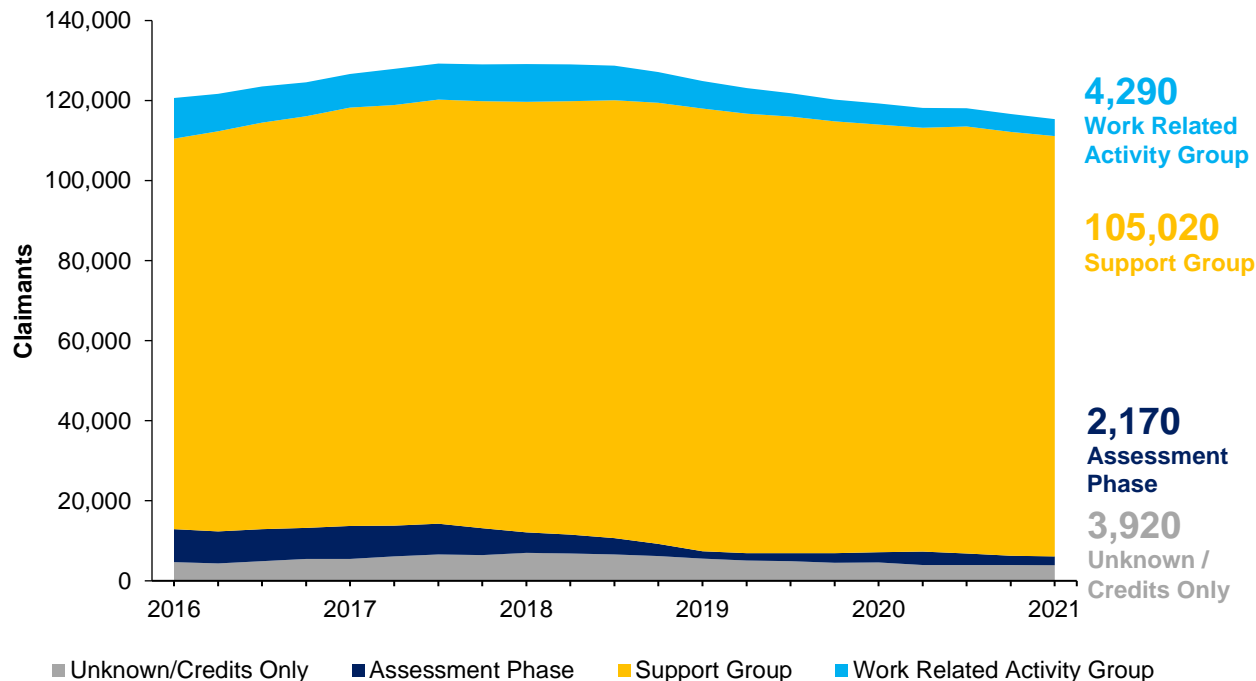
ESA Claimants & Recipients: February 2016 – February 2021



Key Facts

- **At February 2021, there were 115,400 claimants of Employment and Support Allowance.** This represents a decrease of 3.3% (3,900) on a year earlier. This decrease is mainly due to the introduction of Universal Credit.
- Of the 115,400 claimants, 51% (58,710) were female and 49% (56,690) were male.
- Of the 115,400 claimants, 4% (4,290) were in the Work Related Activity Group, 91% (105,020) were in the Support Group. The remaining 5% (6,090) were either in the assessment phase or were receiving credits only or their phase was unknown.
- The average weekly Employment and Support Allowance benefit payment was £146.03.
- See [supplementary tables](#) for further information. Note: due to the diminishing numbers of claimants, supplementary tables are no longer produced for Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance.

ESA Claims by Phase of Claim: February 2016 – February 2021

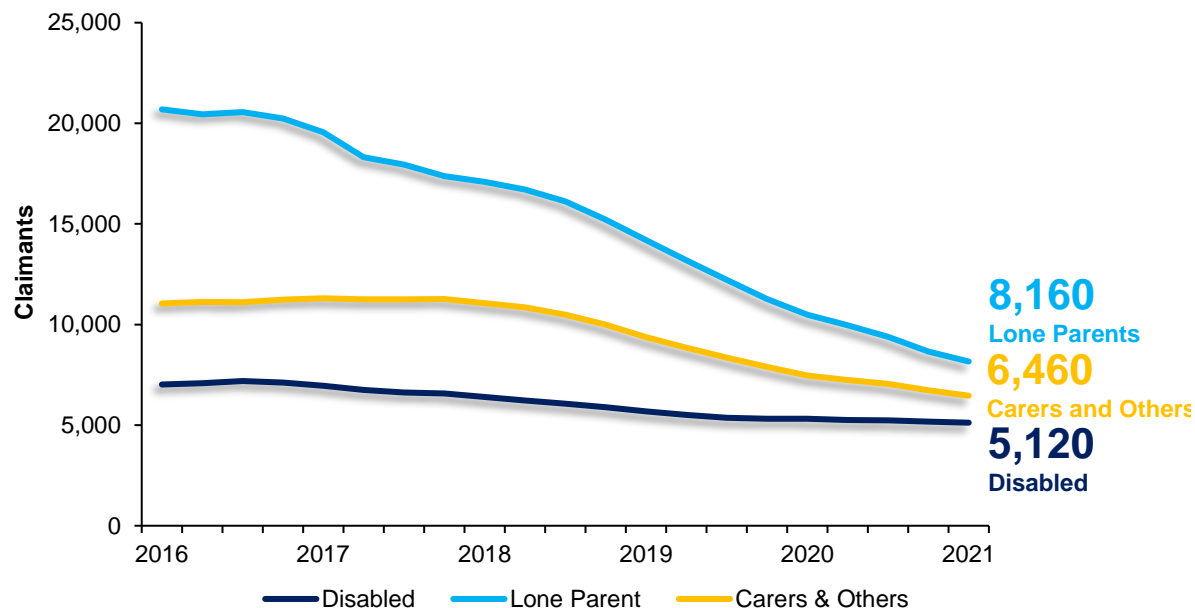


Incapacity Benefit & Severe Disablement Allowance

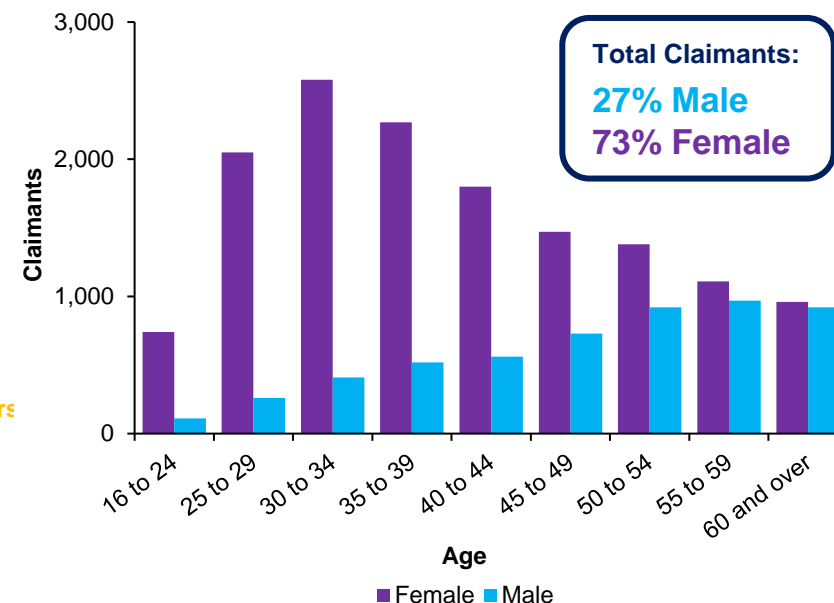
- Between 2010 and 2014, existing Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance customers were moved to ESA by reassessing their eligibility for the benefit. A small number of claimants remained on each benefit with numbers decreasing over time due to attrition.
- **At March 2021, there were 1,360 claimants of Incapacity Benefit and 890 claimants of Severe Disablement Allowance,** decreases of 90 and 130 respectively on a year earlier.

Income Support – National Statistics

Income Support Claimants: February 2016 – February 2021



Income Support Claimants by Age and Gender



Key Facts

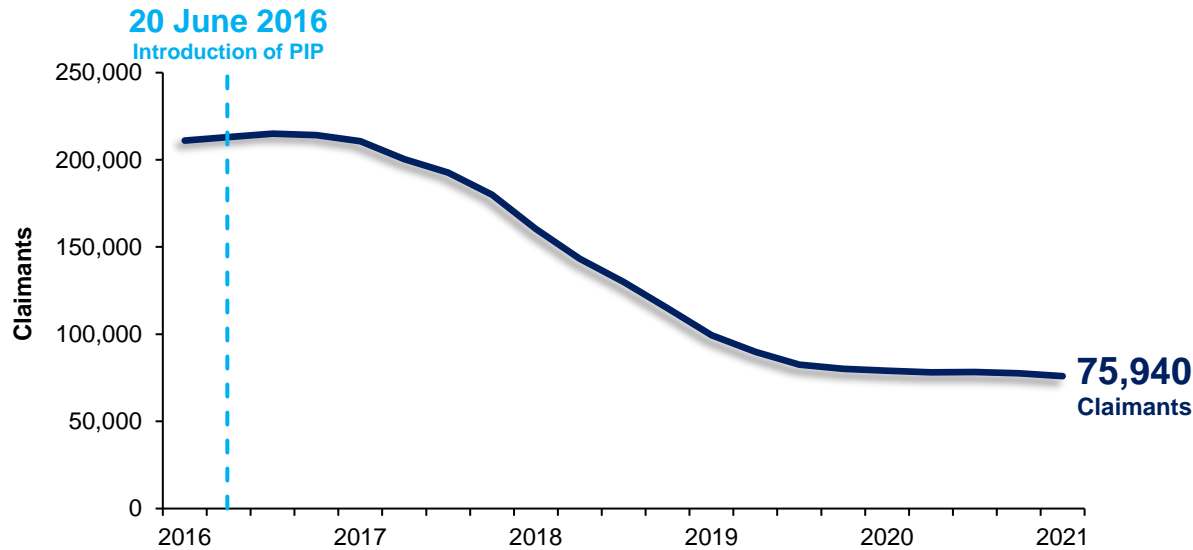
- **At February 2021, there were 19,750 Income Support claimants**, a decrease of 15.2% (3,530) since February 2020. This decrease is mainly due the introduction of Universal Credit (UC).
- Of the 19,750 claimants, 41% (8,160) are categorised as lone parents and 26% (5,120) are disabled.
- The average weekly Income Support payment was £143.23 for a disabled claimant and £62.89 for a lone parent.
- The number of lone parents has been affected by the Lone Parent Obligations policy changes which came into effect in 2008. An extension of this is that from January 2017 existing Lone Parents with a youngest child aged 5 or over can no longer make a new or repeat claim for income support solely on the basis of their parental status. However, for this series Lone Parents are defined as “**single claimants with a child under 16**”.
- See [supplementary tables](#) for further information.

Universal Credit (UC)

- Universal Credit (UC) was introduced for new claims on a phased geographical basis across Northern Ireland from September 2017 to December 2018.
- **With the introduction of Universal Credit, there will be no new claimants to the following benefits covered in this publication:**
 - **Income-based JSA**
 - **Income-related ESA**
 - **Income Support**
- A summary of UC statistics is included in this bulletin. Detailed UC statistics are available via a [separate publication](#).

Disability Living Allowance – National Statistics

DLA Claimants: February 2016 – February 2021



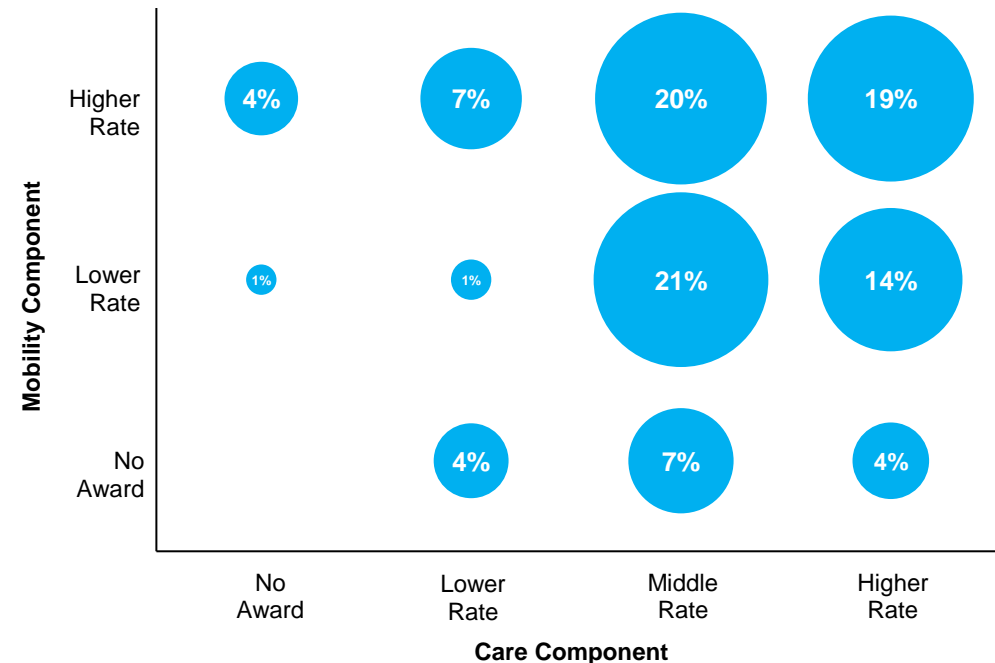
Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) replaced Disability Living Allowance for claimants of working age on 20th June 2016. With the introduction of PIP there have been no new working age claimants to DLA from this date.
- The main reassessment of existing working age DLA claimants to PIP commenced in December 2016 and has now been completed. DLA claimants turning 16 will continue to be reassessed for PIP.
- A summary of PIP statistics is included in this bulletin. Detailed PIP statistics are available via a [separate publication](#).

Key Facts

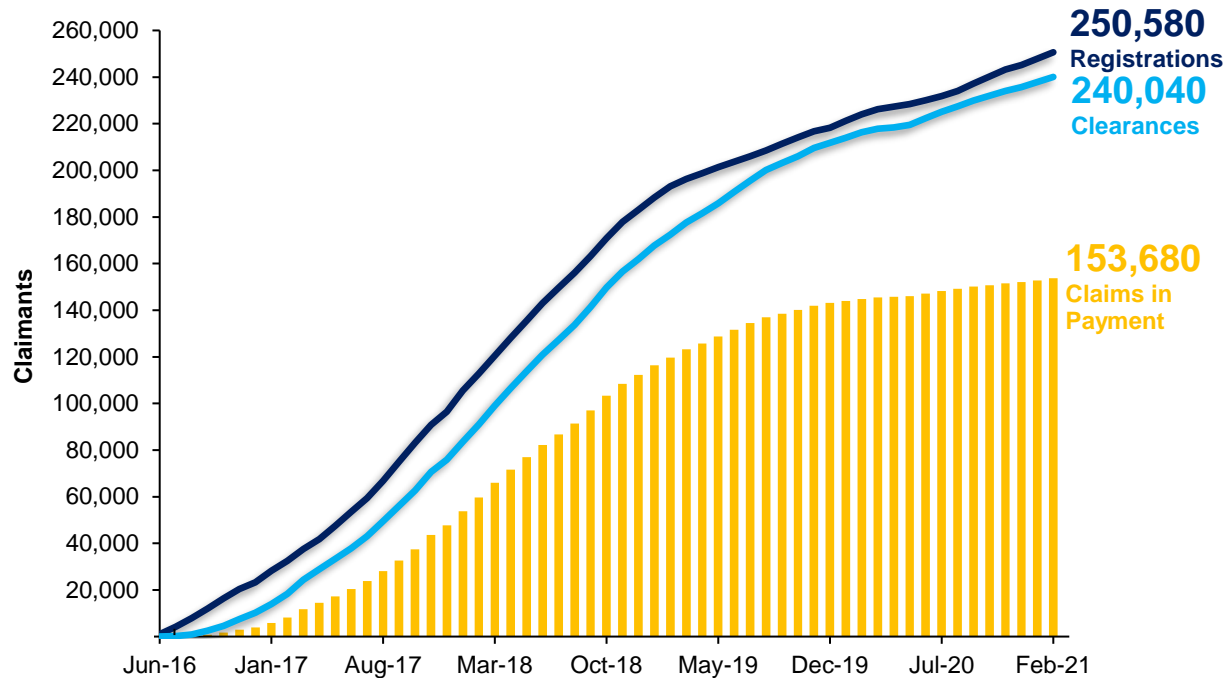
- **At February 2021, there were 75,940 claimants of Disability Living Allowance**, a fall of 4.0% (3,130) on a year earlier. This fall is due to the introduction of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for claimants of working age and the managed reassessment of existing working age claimants to PIP.
- There were 75,700 recipients of DLA (those actually in receipt of a payment).
- 33% (25,100) of claimants were children (under 16), 2% (1,620) were aged between 16 and 65 and 65% (49,230) were aged 66 and over.
- 15% (11,500) of claimants were claiming the care component only, 4% (3,240) were claiming the mobility component only and 81% (61,210) were claiming both the care and mobility components.
- 19% (14,050) of claimants were claiming the highest rate of award (i.e. higher rate mobility and higher rate care components).
- The average weekly Disability Living Allowance benefit payment was £100.95.
- See [supplementary tables](#) for further information.

DLA Claimants by Care/Mobility Component



Personal Independence Payment – Experimental Statistics

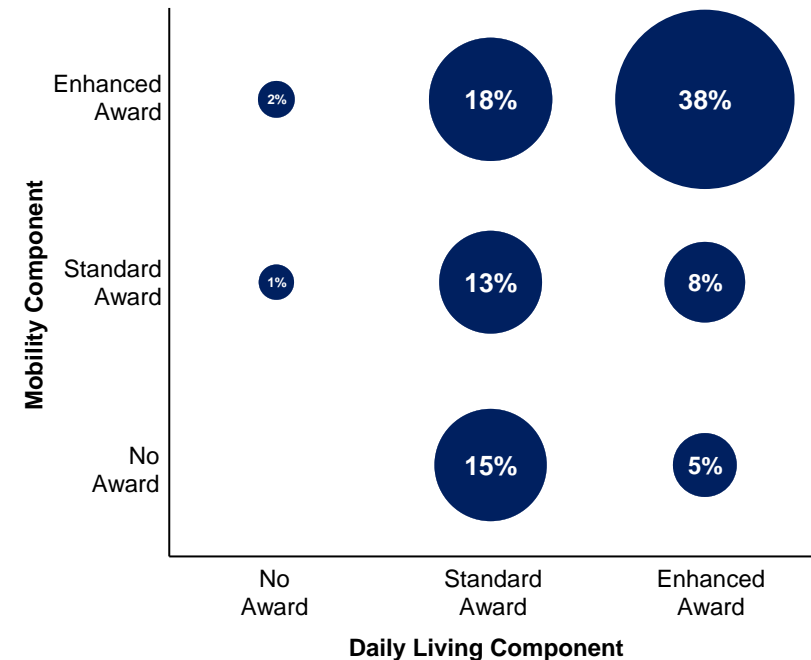
PIP Registrations, Clearances, & Claims in Payment: June 2016 – February 2021



Key Facts

- Personal Independence Payment replaced Disability Living Allowance for claimants of working age on 20th June 2016.
- **At February 2021, there were 153,680 Personal Independence Payment claims in payment.** The overall award rate for Personal Independence Payment claims was 64%.
- 42% (64,750) of claims in payment had psychiatric disorders as the main disabling condition.
- 20% (30,630) of claims in payment were receiving the daily living component only, 3% (4,780) were receiving the mobility component only and 77% (118,280) were receiving both the daily living and mobility components.
- See [Personal Independence Payment publication](#) for further information.

PIP Claims in Payment by Care/Mobility Component

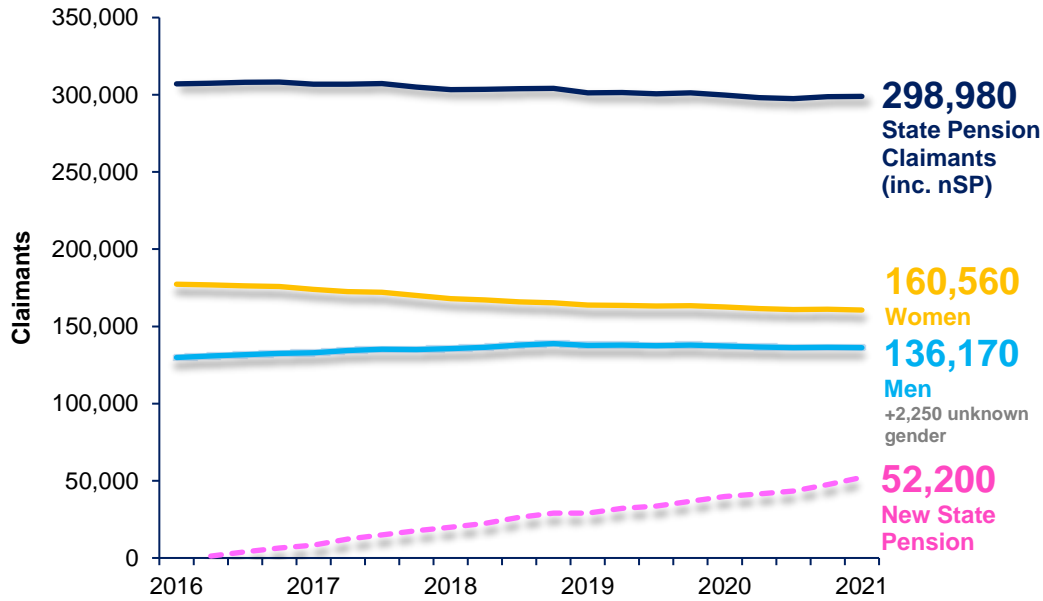


Reassessment of Disability Living Allowance Claimants

- The main reassessment of existing working age DLA claimants to PIP commenced in December 2016 and has now been completed. DLA claimants turning 16 will continue to be reassessed for PIP.
- **75% of DLA reassessed claims are granted an award of PIP (based on initial decision).**
- Of the 153,680 claims in payment, 107,310 (70%) of these are reassessed DLA claims.
- Of the 107,310 reassessed DLA claims in payment, 82,680 (77%) received an award at the enhanced rate and 48,110 (45%) received the highest level of award (i.e. enhanced daily living component and enhanced mobility component).

State Pension – National Statistics

State Pension Claimants: March 2016 – March 2021

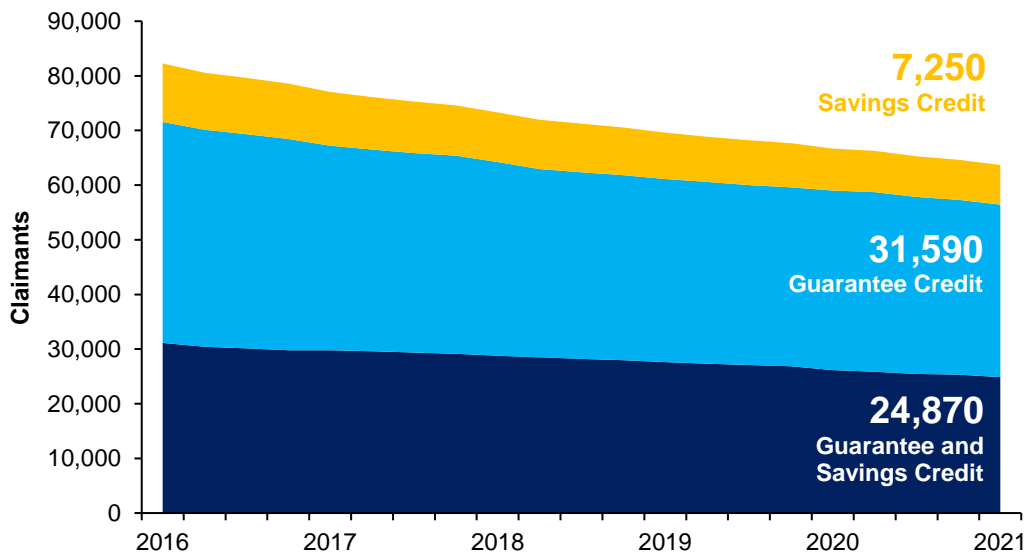


Key Facts

- **At March 2021, there were 298,980 claimants of State Pension**, a fall of 0.3% (830) on a year earlier.
- 54% (160,560) of claimants were women and 46% (136,170) were men. The numbers of female State Pension claimants has decreased steadily since 2012 due to increases in women's State Pension age. Pension age for men and women increased from 65 to 66 between November 2018 and October 2020. Further information is available [here](#).
- The average weekly State Pension amount in payment at March 2021 was £159.21, an increase of £6.31 since March 2020.
- New State Pension (nSP) was introduced for people reaching State Pension age from 6 April 2016. **At March 2021 there were 52,200 nSP recipients.**
- There are a small number of claims (2,250) for which limited information is available at present. For more information see note 3 on page 12.
- See [supplementary tables](#) for further information.

Pension Credit – National Statistics

Pension Credit Claims by Type of Claim: February 2016 – February 2021



Key Facts

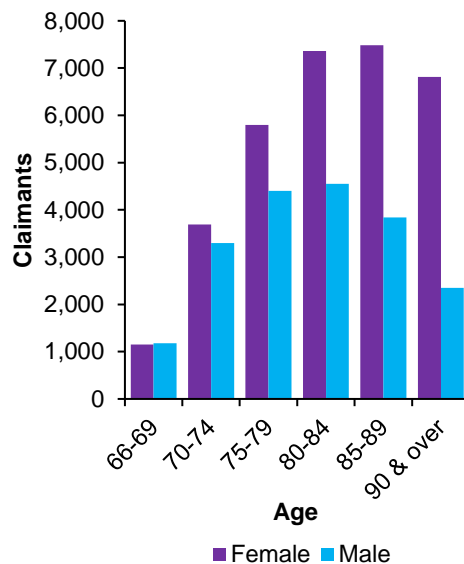
- **At February 2021, there were 63,710 claimants of Pension Credit**, a fall of 4.5% (2,970) on a year earlier.
- There were 75,970 beneficiaries (claimants and partners), a fall of 5.2% (4,190) on a year earlier. 84% (63,710) of beneficiaries were claimants and 16% (12,250) were partners.
- Of all beneficiaries (claimants and partners), 55% (41,420) were female and 45% (34,550) were male. Of all claimants, 61% (38,550) were female and 39% (25,160) were male.
- The average weekly Pension Credit benefit payment was £68.91.
- The downward trend in the number of Pension Credit claimants is mainly due to the increase in State Pension age and the increase in State Pension amounts.
- See [supplementary tables](#) for further information.

Attendance Allowance – National Statistics

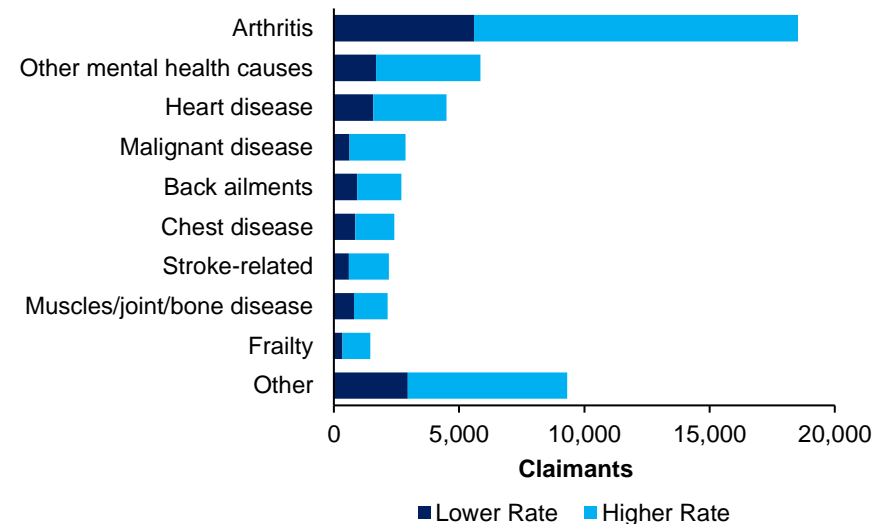
Key Facts

- At February 2021 there were **51,900 claimants of Attendance Allowance**, a decrease of 3.9% (2,110) on a year earlier.
- Of the 51,900 claimants, 49,060 (95%) were recipients and 2,840 (5%) were receiving credits only.
- 62% (32,290) of claimants were female and 38% (19,610) of claimants were male.
- 62% (32,390) of claimants were aged 80 or over.
- 69% (35,950) of claimants were receiving the higher rate of award.
- See [supplementary tables](#) for further information.

AA Claimants by Age and Gender



AA Claimants by Disabling Condition, February 2021

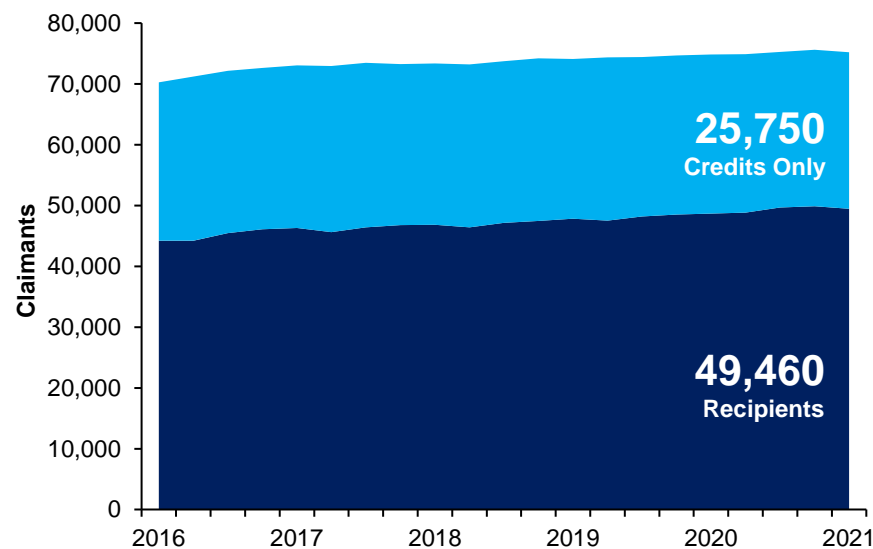


Carer's Allowance – National Statistics

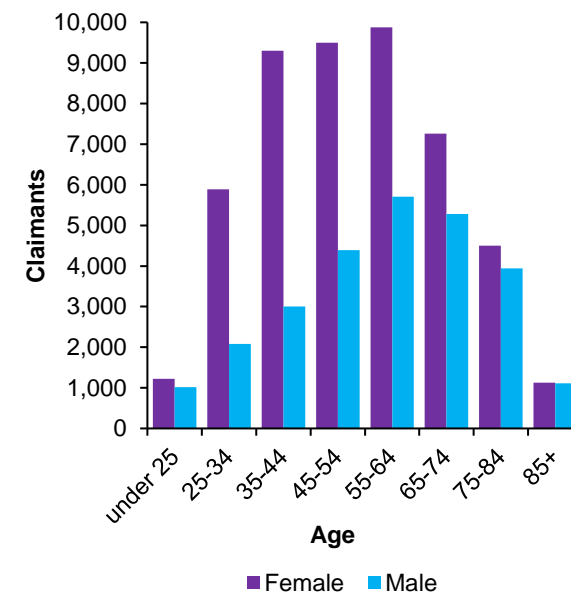
Key Facts

- At February 2021, there were **75,210 claimants of Carer's Allowance**, an increase of 0.5% (410) on a year earlier.
- Of the 75,210 claimants, 49,460 were recipients and 25,750 were receiving credits only.
- Of all claimants, 65% (48,680) were female and 35% (26,530) were male.
- Of all claimants, 71% (53,530) were of working age and 29% (21,680) were of pension age.
- See [supplementary tables](#) for more information.

Carer's Allowance Claimants: February 2016 – February 2021



CA Claimants by Age and Gender



Request for User Feedback

DfC are continuing to reach out to users of this publication to better understand how the statistics are being used and whether there are any improvements that can be made.

We want to hear from people who use the figures within the Benefit Statistics Summary. We would like to find out what people use the statistics for and to make sure that the publication is as useful as it can be. PSU also wishes to assess how we communicate with users on an ongoing basis.

We would appreciate if you completed a short questionnaire to give us your views on the publication. An online version of this questionnaire is available at the following link: <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/U2UE1/>

Alternatively, a hard copy can be requested by emailing psu@communities-ni.gov.uk

Many thanks for your time.

Notes

1. Glossary of terms

Claimants:	The number of clients on the administrative system at the reference date.
Recipients/Beneficiaries:	The number of clients on the administrative system at the reference date who received a benefit payment. For Pension Credit this includes partners.
Households (Universal Credit):	Households are counted as being on Universal Credit where a claimant or claimants within the household are included in the count of claimants.
Credits Only:	The number of clients entitled to the benefit, but who do not actually receive a payment.

2. National Statistics Code of Practice

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

In June 2013, the United Kingdom Statistics Authority designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. In November 2020, the Office for Statistics Regulation conducted a compliance check on these statistics and confirmed that they should continue to be designated as National Statistics. Further details can be found [here](#).

It is the Department for Communities' responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Since designation as National Statistics, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Moved to a more simplified and visually appealing format, explaining our statistics so that they can be better understood by all users.
- Introduced improved validation procedures to ensure quality.
- Revised outputs to reflect the impact of Welfare Reform on benefits contained in this publication, including incorporating Experimental Personal Independence Payment and Universal Credit statistics.

3. Data source and quality

All statistics are based on 100% extracts from the benefit administrative systems. Data is partially validated and is deemed of sufficiently high quality to report on. Data is extracted at 2 weekly, 4 weekly or 6 weekly intervals. Data is represented as end of reported month to aid presentation, but actual extract data will not generally be exactly this date. The statistics show the number of people claiming benefit on the extract date.

State Pension data extracts are not available as regularly as for other benefits. For this reason, the reporting date of State Pension may not align exactly with the other benefits in this publication. For example, February's publication may contain State Pension data at March because no data is available for February.

As data is taken from live administrative systems, it relies on the customer reporting correct information about themselves and staff correctly inputting this data into the system. This does not always occur. Recent estimates (2019/20) indicate that approximately 2.9% of expenditure on benefits is misallocated due to fraud and error. Additional errors that do not result in an incorrect payment can also occur. The Department engages in initiatives to reduce fraud and error in the benefit systems on an ongoing basis.

From July 2020, some new claims to State Pension have been administered through the new "Get Your State Pension" (GYSP) service. At present, limited information is available from the new system and where it is not available, this is reflected in this publication as "unknown" data. However, there is no overlap with claimants from the existing system and totals from the two systems can be combined to produce an overall total of State Pension claimants. At March 2021, there were 2,250 live claimants on the new system. We expect to have more information on these claims for future editions of this publication.

4. Rounding/Disclosure control

The accuracy of statistics may be slightly effected by rounding and/or disclosure control. Even when data (either administrative or sample) do not contain National Insurance number, name and address it may still be possible to identify someone. Say, for example, a data table showed disability type, by ethnicity, within small geographic areas. Some of the cells in the table may only contain one person. It is possible in such cases for personal and sensitive information to be deduced. This is data disclosure and in DfC steps are taken to ensure that it doesn't happen. As an additional protective measure, details of the disclosure control methodology are not published.

5. Measure of unemployment related benefits

The official source of statistics for unemployment related benefits is the experimental Claimant Count, which includes Jobseeker's Allowance claimants and out-of-work Universal Credit claimants who are claiming principally for the reason of being unemployed. Details can be found [here](#).

The DfC JSA figures are presented in this publication because they are consistent with the other benefits used to produce DfC National Statistics and permit a wider set of breakdowns and cross-benefit analysis.

6. Universal Credit Conditionality Regimes

Conditionality regime specifies the category a claimant is in at the end of any given month. Conditionality refers to those work-related activities an eligible adult will have to carry out in order to retain eligibility for Universal Credit. Each eligible adult will fall into one of six conditionality regimes based on their capacity and circumstances. Different members of a household may be subject to the same or different requirements. As circumstances change claimants can also transition between different levels of conditionality.

The conditionality regimes within this publication have been taken from the Universal Credit Full Service system (UCFS) and renamed in order to aid the reader. 'No work requirements' covers the UCFS category 'no work related requirements', 'planning for work (light touch out of work)', 'preparing for work (work preparation and work focused interview)', 'searching for work (intensive)', 'working with requirements (light touch in work)' and 'working no requirements (no work related requirements)'. Conditionality Regimes are detailed in the following table:

No work requirements	Not expected to work at present. Health or caring responsibility prevents claimant from working or preparing for work.
Planning for work	Expected to work in the future. Lone parent/lead carer of child aged 1. Claimant required to attend periodic interviews to plan for their return to work.
Preparing for work	Expected to start preparing for future even with limited capability for work at the present time or parent of a child aged 2. The claimant is expected to take reasonable steps to prepare for working including Work Focused Interview.
Searching for work	Not working, or with very low earnings. Claimant is required to take action to secure work - or more/better paid work. The Work Coach supports them to plan their work search and preparation activity.
Working - with requirements	In work but could earn more, or not working but has a partner with low earnings.
Working - no requirements	Individual or household earnings over the level at which conditionality applies. Required to inform Department for Communities of changes of circumstances, particularly if at risk of decreasing earnings or losing job.

7. Welfare Reform

Universal Credit (UC) was introduced for new claims on a phased geographical basis across Northern Ireland from September 2017 to December 2018. With the introduction of UC, there will be no new claimants to the following benefits covered in this publication: Income-based JSA, Income-related ESA and Income Support. A summary of UC statistics is included in this bulletin. Detailed UC statistics are available via a [separate publication](#).

From 20 June 2016, DLA has been replaced for working age claimants by Personal Independence Payment (PIP). There have been no new working age claimants to DLA from this date. Reassessment of existing DLA claimants to PIP began in December 2016 and has now been completed. Claimants turning 16 will continue to be reassessed for PIP. A summary of PIP statistics is included in this publication as Experimental Statistics. Detailed PIP statistics can be found in a separate publication [here](#).

State Pension age for women increased from 60 to 65 between May 2010 and November 2018 and then increased from 65 to 66 for both men and women between November 2018 and October 2020. State Pension age is currently scheduled to remain at 66 until April 2026. More information is available from [NI Direct](#).

The Lone Parent Obligation policy came into effect from 24th November 2008; Lone Parents with a youngest child aged 12 or over were no longer able to make a new or repeat claim for Income Support solely on the basis of their parental status. Existing Income Support Lone Parents with a youngest child aged 12 or over had their eligibility removed over a period of time commencing 2nd March 2009. From October 2009, this policy was extended to Lone Parents with a youngest child aged 10 or 11 and from October 2010, was extended to Lone Parents with a youngest child aged 7 or over. From January 2017, the policy has been extended to Lone Parents with a youngest child aged 5 or over. Many affected Lone Parents will leave Income Support and claim Jobseeker's Allowance. However, there are exceptions to these rules where the youngest child can legitimately be over the ages mentioned above. Similarly, some former Lone Parents remain on Income Support for other reasons (e.g. they have a long term caring responsibility and claim Carer's Allowance). However for this series, lone parents are defined as "single IS claimants with a child under 16".

8. Known issues, changes and revisions

Changes for this release

N/A

Previous changes – November 2020 (released February 2021)

References to "working age" and "pension age" have been updated to reflect the fact that State Pension age is 66 exactly from October 2020 and will remain there until 2026. Some age bands in tables and reference population estimates have been changed to reflect this.

9. Great Britain statistics

Benefit statistics to cover Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) only are produced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and are available [here](#).

10. Other National and Official Statistics issued by the Department for Communities

Other National and Official Statistics produced by the Department for Communities can be found on the DfC website [here](#).