



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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Our ref:

2015-5072

Dear Jonathan Portes,

Freedom of Information ref: 2015-5072

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 4 December 2015 which we answered on 18 January 2016. Following your request for an internal review we have looked at your request afresh.

In your request you asked:

"I refer to the DWP publication here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-benefit-and-tax-credit-claims-by-recently-arrived-eea-migrants>. I am copying this request to Ed Humpherson at the UK Statistical Authority, given Sir Andrew's letter on this topic and the contact between UKSA, DWP and No 10 that led to this publication.

I would appreciate clarification of the following points.

1. The publication states:

"This approach assesses the nationality and UK arrival data of the main claimant and then makes adjustments to account for their partners. This approach means that it is a possibility that EEA national partners who have been resident for less than 4 years but their EEA national partner claiming benefits has been in the UK for at least 4 years are not included in these statistics."

(A) Please explain the "adjustments" made to account for partners.

(B) Please provide figures for the number of main claimants and the number of partners assumed to be a) UK nationals b) EEA nationals resident less than 4 years c) EEA nationals resident more than 4 years and the basis for the assumptions.

2. The publication states:

To account for EEA nationals who were not recorded as the main claimant in a UK or non-EEA led household claiming benefits or tax credits an uplift has been applied based on a HMRC analysis of EEA nationals who were not the main claimant. This uplift was estimated on the basis of HMRC analysis where the EEA national was the

partner of a non-EEA national main claimant. A similar uplift has been applied to reflect the EEA national partners of EEA national main claimants.

(C) Please explain the uplift - the numbers involved and the basis for the uplift applied.

(D) Please supply the HMRC analysis of EEA nationals who were not the main claimant referred to here.

3. The publication states:

"Estimates also reflect the number of children in households claiming benefits where there is an EEA adult – it is not possible to specifically identify the nationality of these children. It is estimated that a small proportion of the children in these households would have been born in the UK after their parent's arrival in the UK."

(E) Please supply any available information about the age distribution of the children referred to.

(F) Please supply the basis for the assertion that "a small proportion" of these children were born in the UK

(G) Please explain why the LFS/APS was not used to calculate the proportion of children in recently arrived EEA national households who were in fact born in the UK for either the numerator or the denominator.

4. The publication states:

"between 37 per cent and 45 per cent of the EEA nationals (excluding students) who were resident in the UK having arrived in the preceding 4 years were in households claiming either an in-work or out-of-work benefit or tax credit."

(H) Please explain how students have been excluded from a) the numerator and b) the denominator of this calculation.

5. Please explain the statement:

"Due to limitations in the datasets used to produce this analysis it is not possible to produce a more detailed breakdown of these statistics by any sub-national geographic level or for specific nationality groups."

The benefit statistics are produced using a 5% sample, while the APS has a large sample size.

(I) Why is it not possible to break down these statistics between (for example) EU15 and A8 nationals (as is done in the published statistics on National Insurance numbers)?"

DWP response

For ease I have labelled each of your 9 questions from (A) to (I).

(A) Please explain the "adjustments" made to account for partners.

The adjustments reflected the uncertainty in using the data to identify the nationality of the partners involved in a benefit claim, and some data issues that arose in the production of a consolidated sample dataset from different departmental administrative datasets. Hence the ad hoc statistics were presented as a range. The estimates for these adjustments were developed through a combination of bespoke ad hoc analyses and analyst judgement.

These adjustments were to specifically account for:

i) EEA led claims that had an EEA partner;

Estimated that approximately 60% of EEA national led claims with a partner had an EEA partner.

ii) EEA partners of non-EEA led claims;

Estimated that there was an additional 10% of EEA nationals who were not identified in the DWP data on tax credit claims.

iii) To reflect an undercount in the recording of partners for some out of work benefits.

An adjustment was made to assume a similar distribution of couple/single claims for out of work claims as in work claims.

(B) Please provide figures for the number of main claimants and the number of partners assumed to be a) UK nationals b) EEA nationals resident less than 4 years c) EEA nationals resident more than 4 years and the basis for the assumptions.

The specific additional information requested here is not currently available and would require the production of a new ad hoc analysis. It is estimated that this would incur a disproportionate cost in the production of this analysis.

(C) Please explain the uplift - the numbers involved and the basis for the uplift applied.

The uplift applied was an estimate derived from a bespoke HMRC analysis of a sample of the Tax Credit caseload, this suggested that an additional 10% of claims involved an EEA national as the secondary claimant where the main claimant was a non-EEA national.

An uplift was necessary because of recording differences between the DWP and HMRC benefit and tax credit caseload data, when consolidated as per the source data used in this analysis.

(D) Please supply the HMRC analysis of EEA nationals who were not the main claimant referred to here.

HMRC subsequently published an ad hoc statistical publication on the number of EEA nationals on the Tax Credit caseload in 2013/14 having arrived / registered for a NINO within the previous 4 years. This identifies where any adult involved in the claim was an EEA national.

This is accessible via:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/migrants-and-tax-credits/migrants-and-tax-credits-freedom-of-information-response>

(E) Please supply any available information about the age distribution of the children referred to.

The dataset used in this analysis does not contain the necessary data to provide the additional information requested here.

(F) Please supply the basis for the assertion that "a small proportion" of these children were born in the UK

This was a judgement made by the analysts involved, which included consideration of a bespoke analysis of a sample dataset by HMRC analysts which suggested that a small proportion of the children in recently arrived EEA national households were born in the UK – approximately 10%.

(G) Please explain why the LFS/APS was not used to calculate the proportion of children in recently arrived EEA national households who were in fact born in the UK for either the numerator or the denominator.

The dataset used for the numerator does not enable this detailed information to be extracted. Therefore the adjustment described earlier was applied.

The LFS was deemed to be inappropriate for use as the basis for the numerator in this analysis. This is because there is significant under reporting of benefit receipt in the LFS, which varies considerably by benefit type and is expected to be more significant for some types of in work benefit / tax credits.

The LFS was used as the basis for estimating the EEA national recently arrived and still resident population for the denominator. This is because it was considered to provide the best available source that aligned with the timeframes being considered in this analysis (which were determined by data availability) and provided the best degree of information to identify this population using the individual level dataset.

(H) Please explain how students have been excluded from a) the numerator and b) the denominator of this calculation.

No explicit exemption was applied to exclude students from the analysis to produce the numerator estimate. However, it was considered that given the access to benefit requirements, EEA nationals with a right to reside status as a student are unlikely to be entitled to be the main claimants. It was also considered that the use of a range was an appropriate means to reflect the additional uncertainty of EEA national partners who were students.

For the estimation of the recently arrived and still resident EEA national population in the denominator a series of filters were applied to the relevant variables in the LFS to identify and then exclude students.

(I) Why is it not possible to break down these statistics between (for example) EU15 and A8 nationals (as is done in the published statistics on National Insurance numbers)?

It is not possible to provide any further breakdown of the benefit statistics. This is because they were produced using a 5% sample dataset. This sample dataset was considered suitable to provide the aggregate figures as presented in the publication. The information to provide further geographic or sub-population breakdowns is not readily available and would require a new analysis that would incur disproportionate cost to produce.

The LFS was only used for estimating the recently arrived and still resident EEA national population in the denominator.

The existing published statistics series Nationality at point of NINO registration of DWP working age benefit recipients are based on a 100% administrative data.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact us quoting the reference number above. A copy of this letter has been sent to the UK Statistics Authority.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Team
Statistical Services
Department for Work and Pensions

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 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 <https://ico.org.uk/>