

Note from House of Commons Library Economic Policy & Statistics Section, 18 February

You wanted verification of the Prime Minister's [statement](#) at PMQs on Wednesday that out of 279,000 people who were on the Flexible New Deal, 3,800 got a long-term job.

This is a misleading interpretation of the statistics.

The figures the Prime Minister used are based on the first release of Flexible New Deal (FND) data by the DWP in November 2010. From when the FND started in October 2009 to August 2010 there were:

- 278,500 starts
- 16,240 short job outcomes (defined as individual working at least 13 weeks)
- 3,850 sustained job outcomes (defined as individual working at least 26 weeks out of 30)

When interpreting these figures it is important to note that the FND started in October 2009. Given that it takes six months for an individual to acquire a "sustained job", figures on sustained job outcomes only begin six months after the FND started, i.e. in April 2010. The DWP's "Flexible New Deal Information Note" makes this point while warning that care should be taken when interpreting these figures:

Until the FND programme reaches a steady state job outcome statistics can be hard to interpret. For example, care should be taken when interpreting the relationship between starts and job outcomes as the series will naturally improve as a higher proportion of participants have been on the provision long enough to achieve a short and or a sustained outcome.

[Source: DWP website, "[Flexible New Deal Information Note](#)", para 9]

More up-to-date FND statistics were [published](#) by the DWP at 9.30am on Wednesday 16 February, the morning of PMQs, They show that in the period October 2009 to November 2010 there were:

- 329,410 starts
- 31,870 short job outcomes (defined as individual working at least 13 weeks)
- 13,970 sustained job outcomes (defined as individual working at least 26 weeks out of 30)

As you can see, the proportion of sustained job outcomes to starts is higher now than was the case in the original figures which the Prime Minister quoted. In the three-month period (September to November 2010) for which new data has been published since the previous statistical release, an extra 10,000 sustained job outcomes have been recorded. Data for the latest month where figures are available, November 2010, further illustrates the improved proportion of sustained job outcomes to starts:

- 14,230 starts
- 4,240 short job outcomes (defined as individual working at least 13 weeks)
- 3,370 sustained job outcomes (defined as individual working at least 26 weeks out of 30)

I have attached an Excel workbook containing monthly breakdowns of these data ([published](#) by the DWP), broken down by each FND provider, as well as tables with cumulative totals (which I have calculated).

I hope this is helpful. Please contact me if you require any further information.