



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Income Support Lone Parents by Jobcentre Plus District and Age of Youngest Child

Ad-hoc Statistical release

March 2014

Contents

Background 3

Sources of data 5

Results 6

Background

Income Support (IS) for Lone Parents is currently available to un-partnered parents, over the age of 16 who have a child under the age of 5 years old and to Lone Parents who qualify for IS for other reasons e.g. caring responsibilities or short-term disability (<https://www.gov.uk/income-support/eligibility>)¹. The eligibility for this group has changed significantly since 2008 with the age of youngest child entitlement to IS decreasing from 15 in four rollout phases over 4 years. **Table 1** provides a timeline of the phased changes to Lone Parent Obligations (LPO).

Table 1: Phased rollout of increased Lone Parent Obligations

Phase	Start Date	End Date	Age of Youngest Child affected
1	24/11/08	24/11/09	15-12
2	26/10/09	26/10/10	11-10
3	25/10/10	21/05/12	9-7
4	21/05/12	18/11/12	6-5

Currently lone parents with a youngest child aged 1, 2 or 3, who are entitled to Income Support (IS) solely on the basis of being a lone parent, attend mandatory Work-focused Interviews with a Jobcentre Plus adviser every 6 months, which then increase to quarterly when the child is aged 4.

As of 28 April 2014² Jobcentre Plus advisors will be able to determine the frequency and duration of mandatory Work Focused Interviews for certain³ lone parents with a youngest child age 1-4.

The changes also introduce Work Related Activity (WRA)⁴ for certain⁵ lone and couple parents with a youngest child aged 3 & 4. In Universal Credit this requirement is known as work preparation.

1 Benefits are arranged hierarchically. Incapacity Benefits are above Lone Parents in this hierarchy, thus a person who is a lone parent and receives Incapacity Benefit or Employment Support Allowance would not be classified as a Lone Parent.

2 Subject to the Passage of Affirmative Draft Regulations.

3 Lone parents that claim Income Support solely on the basis of being a lone parent.

4 Suitable work-related activity would be tailored to the needs of the individual. It could include preparing a CV, exploring the local labour market or attending training to improve work-related skills courses. Parents in scope of this change will not be required to apply for or take up a job as part of WRA.

5 Lone parents that claim Income Support (IS) solely on the basis of being a lone parent; lone parents in the Employment and Support Allowance Work Related Activity Group (WRAG). The change will also extend to responsible carers with a youngest child age 3 or 4 that are entitled to Universal Credit and new –world (ESA).

Following a discussion with each lone parent the requirement to undertake work-related activity in order to prepare for work will be determined by the adviser. In cases where appropriate work-related activity is identified it must be reasonable, take into account the circumstances of the individual lone parent and be likely to improve the lone parent's prospects for future employment. .

Parents in scope of the change will not be required to apply for or take up a job.

The Department currently produces caseload statistics for Income Support Lone Parents (ISLPs) which can be broken down by several variables including Region and Age of Youngest Child (AYC). These are available at the following link (<http://83.244.183.180/100pc/tabtool.html>). The current publication disaggregates the caseload by Jobcentre Plus district and age of youngest child groupings consistent with the aforementioned policy changes.

Source of data

Data present here is sourced from the DWP's Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

Results

The latest available ISLP caseload figures (August 2013) split by district and AYC relevant to current policy is provided in the associated excel document.

Stuart Prince
Stuart.Prince@dwp.gsi.gov.uk
Department for Work and Pensions
March 2014