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CLIENT GROUP ANALYSIS: QUARTERLY BULLETIN ON FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN ON KEY BENEFITS –

February 2005

This analysis is based on people of working age who claim a key benefit and who receive an additional allowance for a child under 16 years of age or for a young adult dependant aged between 16 and 18 in full-time education. It has been developed from existing data on individual benefits to give a more coherent picture of claimants rather than claims. It is published on a regular basis via a National Statistics bulletin. Please see Notes to Editors for further details.

Main findings

At February 2005, 2.7 million children (20 per cent of all children in Great Britain) were living in families claiming a key benefit. This figure fell by 65 thousand between February 2004 and February 2005. Similarly, the number of children in families receiving an income-related benefit fell by 97 thousand between February 2004 and February 2005, from 2.29 million (16.9 per cent of all children in GB) to 2.19 million (16.2 per cent of all children in GB).

57 per cent of key benefit children were in families that were claiming Income Support only.

65 per cent of children were living in families where the claimant was single.

Family size

While around 4.2 per cent of families claiming Child Benefit had four or more children at the end of Feb 2005, the figure was 7.6 per cent for families on key benefits. For the Unemployed group the figure was higher at 9.1 per cent.

Age Groups

Among the Sick / Disabled Group, proportionally fewer children were under the age of five compared to other statistical groups. This reflects the older age profile of those claiming a sickness and/or disability benefit.

Duration of claim

Of those children in families on a key benefit, 65 per cent had been on benefit for at least two years. For the Sick / Disabled Group, the figure was higher, 75 per cent. The percentage of children in families claiming benefit for under one year is 22 per cent.

Regions

The percentage of children living in families claiming a key benefit varied from 28 per cent in the London Government Office Region, down to 13 per cent in the South East Government Office Region.

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For the purposes of the statistical bulletin key benefits are defined as:

- Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Incapacity Benefit (IB)
- Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA)
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Income Support (IS)
- National Insurance Credits (through JSA or IB)

The Information Directorate (InfD) of DWP has developed these analyses from existing samples of administrative data on the population of working age claimants. This work was done primarily to help improve the relevance of DWP data to monitor the government's welfare reform agenda.

By matching data from individual 5per cent samples, an estimate can be made of the number of people who were claiming at least one of the key benefits that are available to the population of working age people. The main exceptions are Widow's and Bereavement Benefits, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. Information on the characteristics of these claimants is also available, such as age, sex, geography, family type, client group, duration of claim and number of children. It is also possible to look at changes in the composition of this group in the benefits system over time, including those that affect individual claimants.

These analyses are based on information collected for the administration of benefits and tax credits. This means that analyses of such things as family type are based mainly on those for whom some additional money via benefits or tax credits is payable. The 'children' analyses are based on children in families where the claimant receives additional money via benefits or tax credits for children or young adult dependants i.e. those aged 16-18 and still in full-time education. Full information on children is available from benefit and/or Child Tax Credit (CTC) data regarding families in receipt of income-related benefits IS, JSA(IB). CTC data also provides child information regarding families with children in receipt of non income-related benefits (IB, SDA, DLA, Contributory JSA, JSA Credits). The main gaps are children in families receiving non income-related benefits where there is no entitlement to CTC (e.g. household income is too high) or where there is entitlement but CTC is still not in payment (e.g. it has not been claimed by the family).

The bulletin includes appendices on the Child Support Agency and Maternity Allowance.

Figures are published on a quarterly basis via a statistical bulletin. The definitive estimates of caseloads and characteristics of claimants of each individual benefit can be found in the separate publications and press releases that InfD also issues on behalf of DWP.

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