

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY S. PITMAN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 28th APRIL 2009**

Question

“How many people are currently in receipt of Long Term Incapacity Allowance (LTIA), Short Term Incapacity Allowance (STIA) and Invalidity Allowance, and what are the illnesses/injuries that they suffer? And how many of these recipients are currently receiving an Incapacity Pension?”

Would the Minister inform Members as to how many recipients of LTIA, STIA and Invalidity Allowance are currently deemed by the Medical Board as a 100% loss of faculty, and therefore unfit to work?

Could the Minister explain why a person being assessed by the Medical Board is only assessed on the specific body part affected by an illness/injury, and why the Board does not take into account the affect on the whole body of the illness/injury and the likelihood of that person being unable to work, given that many employers will not employ such a person due to there being a potential financial liability?

Answer

As at 7 April 2009, Departmental records indicate the following open claims:

	Number of open claims
Long Term Incapacity Allowance	3,035
Short Term Incapacity Allowance	721
Invalidity Benefit	1,353
Incapacity Pension	9

Incapacity benefits were updated in 2004 and LTIA was introduced by the States to replace two benefits- Invalidity Benefit (paid in respect of long term illnesses) and Disability Benefit (paid in respect of injuries). Individuals claiming LTIA are assessed by a Medical Board and awarded a benefit based on their percentage loss of faculty. Individuals receiving LTIA can receive the benefit and undertake paid employment at the same time.

There are currently 98 individuals claiming LTIA with a 100% award.

STIA is awarded on the basis of a medical certificate signed by a General Practitioner, who certifies that the individual is temporarily incapable of work, and the benefit is paid at the standard rate of £172.83 per week.

Invalidity Benefit is only available to individuals who have been claiming this benefit continuously since before October 2004, when incapacity benefits were updated. This is a long-term benefit paid at the standard rate of £172 83. Individuals receiving Invalidity Benefit are not allowed to work whilst they receive the benefit.

These benefits cover a very wide range of medical conditions. The most common conditions across all three benefits are anxiety/depression and back pain. An analysis of the open claims at 7 April provides the following breakdown:

	Depression/Anxiety/Stress	Back pain/Back injury
Long Term Incapacity Allowance	13%	14%
Short Term Incapacity Allowance	27%	9%
Invalidity Benefit	29%	10%

The Medical Officer of Health's report for 2008 provides information on the conditions giving rise to the highest amount of benefit paid in 2007.

These are:

Rank	STIA	LTIA
1	Depression	Depression
2	Pain-back	Pain-back
3	Stress	Mental illness
4	Operation	Nervous disorder
5	Upper respiratory tract infection	Heart disease
6	Post-operation	Anxiety
7	Hospitalisation	Arthritis
8	Anxiety	Epilepsy / fits
9	Hospital Treatment	Arthritis
10	Virus infection	Chronic fatigue syndrome

The Social Security Law (Article 16) and the Social Security (Assessment of Long-Term Incapacity) Order set out the assessment principles for the award of benefit. They set out how the Medical Board should assess the loss of faculty that the individual has suffered as a result of the long-term condition.

The ability of the individual to work is specifically excluded from the assessment of the loss of faculty. The assessment is a medical assessment, not a financial one. If the individual is unable to work as result of a long-term medical condition, the Income Support scheme is available to provide financial assistance.