



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

RESEARCH, DOCUMENT

Discretionary Assistance Fund: analysis report (summary)

An analysis of the recipients of the Discretionary Assistance Fund and of economic indicators to assess whether the payments of awards are made where the need is the greatest.

First published: 5 October 2023

Last updated: 5 October 2023

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Introduction

The Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) offers two types of grant. Individual Assistance Payments (IAPs) help people live independently in their home or a property that they are moving into. Emergency Assistance Payments (EAPs) help pay for essential costs, such as food, gas, electricity, clothing or emergency travel.

DAF data is supplied to the Welsh Government by our service provider NEC Software Solutions UK. This data has not undergone the same level of quality assurance as Official Statistics and the data may be revised in future.

Furthermore, the data for this ad-hoc analysis report was received in stages and therefore some of the tables have dates referring to slightly different periods but they broadly refer to the year 2022 to 2023.

This analysis was conducted in-house by analysts in the Welsh Government. This report has two aims:

1. To present an analysis of the recipients of DAF in terms of their age, ways individuals access DAF payments and the number of times the DAF is used per individual.
2. To examine the DAF awards in the 22 local authorities in Wales to see if there are any emerging patterns in specific economic indicators that might explain the number of awards in each local authority.

Main findings

During the year 2022-23, 97% of DAF awards were EAP and the remaining 3% were IAP.

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However, the distribution of awards by age was not the same for EAP and IAP awards: individuals aged 16 to 39 years had more EAP awards, whereas there was a greater proportion of older individuals claiming IAP awards.

In terms of the accessibility, 99% of individuals accessed DAF online. However, older age groups accessed DAF via telephone more than those in younger age groups.

Between May 2022 and May 2023, individuals aged 30 to 39 years received the highest number of EAP awards. Moreover, 59% of EAP awards were given to individuals aged 16 to 39 years. In comparison, individuals 70 years of age and over accounted for 2% of EAP awards.

Regarding the number payments individuals received (from a maximum of five payments until March 2023), it is the youngest age groups that claimed an EAP the highest number of times (on average three times) and the average number of payments falls as age increases.

This analysis has shown that the DAF awards for EAP – which help to pay for essential costs, such as food, gas, electricity, clothing or emergency travel – tend to be concentrated in local authorities with the highest:

- proportion of people not in employment receiving Universal Credit
- proportion of people receiving legacy benefits such as income support and Employment and Support Allowance
- economic inactivity rates
- level of food parcels distributed to adults per capita
- proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals
- proportion of children living in relative low-income families
- proportion of people receiving Universal Credit with a child entitlement
- level of food parcels delivered to children per capita
- percentage of small areas among the 10% most deprived small areas in Wales

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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Social research number: 97/2023

Digital ISBN: 978-1-83504-823-8



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