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Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017

(CC - ONS Parliamentary Unit)

Dear John,

When being challenged over their policies on disability, Government ministers have repeatedly defended their position by telling parliament that they spend about £50 billion on disability benefits.

Here are some recent examples:

<http://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-09-13/debates/6C56012C-93A3-4D4F-8507-6AA0973B2F63/Engagements>

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2016-11-14/debates/D5D5E72C-3772-46E6-8A4F-15A8F8EBA19A/Under-OccupancyCharge>

<https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/rudd-refuses-to-apologise-over-50-billion-disability-welfare-tv-debate-lie/> (The Home Secretary uses the term 'welfare' here rather than 'benefits' but the meaning is clear).

*Ministers have been told several times that this figure is misleading. It is a matter of public record that DWP Ministers have been told several times that the figures around disability and benefits are misleading.*

Figures released by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request (see attached) show how they calculate this figure. What this response shows is that this figure does not represent the Government's annual spending on disability benefits, but on overall support for disabled people.

The FOI request clearly demonstrates that the £50 billion is calculated by adding spending on other Government support for disabled people to spending on disability benefits. Most of this other support, for instance, relates to spending on adult social care.

Although the figures contained in the FOI response refer to 2012-13, subsequent DWP spending figures show that spending on disability benefits in 2015-16 came to about £37 billion at most, with 2016-17 spending forecast to be about £38 billion (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/benefit-expenditure-and-caseload-tables-2017>). Again, the figure will only reach £50 billion by including spending on areas such as adult social care, concessionary travel, and disabled facilities grants.

I would be grateful if you could write to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary and the Work and Pensions Secretary highlighting the accurate figures above, and request that they provide an explanation for continuing to use misleading figures. I would also ask that, as part of your role to ensure veracity of statistical data, the Government only use the £50 billion in relation to the overall amount of spending on disabled people's support, and make it clear that this includes spending on social care.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Stephen Lloyd MP  
Eastbourne & Willingdon



Website: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

John Pring  
By email

**Your Reference:**

**Our Ref: Fol 4653**

Date: 1 December 2015

Dear John,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on 30 October 2015. Please accept my apologies for the delay in replying. You asked:

- 1. Ministers have repeatedly stated that the government spends “about £50 billion” a year on services and support for disabled people. Could you please tell me how this figure is calculated ie broken down into its constituent parts such as spending on ESA, spending on Access to Work, spending on adult social care, etc*

In relation to question 1 above, the Department calculated the following breakdown based on data from 2012/13.

**Government Spending on Disability**

Spending	2012/13	
	Forecast spend (£ billion)	Actual spend (£ billion)
<b>Benefits</b>		
Disability Living Allowance	13.6	13.4
Personal Independence Payments	0.0	0.0
Attendance Allowance	5.6	5.5
Employment and Support Allowance	6.5	6.8
Incapacity Benefit	2.8	3.3
Severe Disablement Allowance	0.9	0.9
Industrial Injuries	0.9	0.9
<b>Other government support for disabled people</b>		
Adult Social Care	15.4	15.4
Specialist Disability Employment Provision	0.3	0.3
Supporting People. Please note, this was a part of Right to Control that was stopped in 2013	1.6	1.6
Concessionary travel	1.0	1.0

Disabled Facilities	0.2	0.2
Motability	0.2	0.2
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>49.5</b>

2. Please also tell me how, according to this calculation, this total figure has changed for every year from 2007-08 until 2015-16.

Data showing spending on benefits for other years is publicly available online here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/benefit-expenditure-and-caseload-tables-2015>

The Department does not hold additional data regarding the non-DWP parts of disability spending, including Adult Social Care. However, to be helpful, we note that figures on Adult Social Care expenditure from 2009/10 to 2014/15 have been published online. See Annex C (page 27) here: <http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB18445/pss-exp-eng-14-15-prov-rpt.pdf>

The Department holds data on spending on disability employment programmes, as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>
<b>Financial Status</b>	<b>Actual (£ million)</b>	<b>Actual (£ million)</b>	<b>Actual (£ million)</b>	<b>Actual (£ million)</b>
<b>Residential training</b>	15	15	13	11
<b>Access To Work</b>	93	95	108	97
<b>Work Choice</b>	79	83	86	88
<b>Remploy Investment</b>	50	43	5	0
<b>Remploy ongoing</b>	171	62	83	67
<b>Right to Control</b>	3	3	4	0

We cannot provide additional figures to answer question 2 above, particularly for years prior to 2011, as the Department went through a significant cost centre structure change in 2012. Attempting to map the costs from one structure to another would reflect a disproportionate cost to the Department.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Savage

Work & Health Joint Unit, Department for Work & Pensions, Caxton House, Ground Floor, Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA.

[ben.savage@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ben.savage@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)

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### **Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act**

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing [freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwp.gsi.gov.uk) or by writing to DWP, Central FoI Team, Caxton House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NA. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)