

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES – 20 OCTOBER 2016 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Department of Human Services

Topic: Disability Support Pension – Medical Reviews – transfers to Newstart

Question reference number: 4 (HS 4)

Senator: Siewert

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 2 December 2016

Number of pages: 2

Question:

a) Senator SIEWERT: So can you tell me how many have gone off Newstart?

Ms Campbell: I do not think we have that. We will just get someone to see whether we can find the figures about how many people who have gone off DSP and are totally not on payment. Is that what you are looking for?

Senator SIEWERT: Just to be clear—I was asking about numbers this morning—there is the cohort that has gone onto Newstart, Youth Allowance et cetera, and there is the cohort that were dropped straight off any form of income support. What I want to know is of that group that went onto Newstart, which overall is around 2,400 or something, how many have then come off Newstart.

Ms Campbell: I think that is easier. We can tell you who is no longer on Newstart.

b) Senator SIEWERT: Can you tell me how many of those have been suspended?

Ms Campbell: Sorry, I am a bit confused. Suspended as in what?

Senator SIEWERT: As in they are off Newstart because they have not met their mutual obligation requirements. I am starting to get emails from people that have gone from DSP to Newstart and are not able or well enough to be able to meet their jobactive requirements.

Ms Campbell: So what you are looking for is numbers coming off DSP, on Newstart and subsequently suspended?

Senator SIEWERT: Do they turn up as off Newstart when they are suspended or breached? Do they show up in the system?

Senator Ryan: You want to know the number of people that moved from DSP to Newstart and then, of that component, how many are breached or suspended.

Senator SIEWERT: And how many are off.

Ms Campbell: How many are off altogether and, we will assume, have income of some description?

Senator SIEWERT: Yes. I am a bit concerned about the suspended ones if they are marked as just off for the time being, but they are marked as breached or whatever?

Ms Campbell: I think we should be able to tell whether they are suspended or they are off payment, but we cannot do that tonight; we would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The *Disability Support Pension (DSP) – review recipients aged under 35 years* measure commenced on 1 July 2014 and concluded in September 2016. The Department reviewed more than 24,000 recipients.

A total of 2,800 recipients transferred from DSP to Newstart Allowance (NSA) as a result of the reviews. Of these, at 30 December 2016:

- 211 people are no longer in receipt of any income support payment; and
- 28 are now in receipt of a different income support payment.

As at 30 December 2016, there were 68 recipients still in receipt of NSA who had their payment suspended at least once. In all cases, payment was restored when the recipient re-engaged with the Department.