# This "climate of fear" means 1.8 million people have potentially been too scared to seek help they are entitled to from the state.

This is a line from an [excellent Guardian article](http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/nov/20/scrounger-stigma-poor-people-benefits) on our report by Randeep Ramesh, and it refers to a statistic that I supplied him that does *not* feature in the report – so I’ve written a short note on it here.

In our survey, people who claimed benefits in the past year were asked:

*Which of the following, if any, have made YOU YOURSELF delay or not claim benefits in the past, from the point you needed and thought you might be entitled to them?*

We then gave them a list of responses, which were classified into the three types of stigma we use in the report:

* **Personal stigma:** 
  + How you would feel about yourself for claiming (e.g. ‘pride’, dislike of ‘charity’)
  + Thinking [benefits/tax credits] are for other people, not people like me
* **Social stigma:**
  + How family, friends or neighbours would react
* **Institutional stigma:** 
  + How I would be treated by officials while applying
  + Having to provide personal information (about income or having a partner)

(For those who think the last of these is not stigma-related, the numbers only change very marginally if we exclude this – from 1.8m to 1.7m).

To assemble this into the estimated number of people in Britain who have delayed/avoided claiming due to stigma, we focused on working-age people aged 16-65 (because we didn’t ask about means-tested pension benefits), and used our main sample (ignoring the additional samples of benefit claimants, so we know what proportion of people have claimed benefits in the past year).

We then multiplied the proportion of claimants who said they’d delayed/avoided claiming (23%) by the proportion of our sample who reported claiming benefits in the past year (20%) by the number of working-age people in Britain (40m, according to 2011 data from nomis 19/11/2012). And this produces the 1.8m figure.

*Ben Baumberg, 20/11/2012*