Work Capability Assessment – Taking the effects of cancer treatments into account

Tell us what you think

January 2012
Important

Green writing

In this easy-read booklet we sometimes explain what words mean.

The first time we mention any of these words, it is in bold green writing. Then we write what the words mean in a light blue box. If any of the words are used later in the booklet, we show them in normal green writing.

These words and what they mean are also in a Word List at the back of the booklet.

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What this booklet is about

This booklet is part of our consultation about changing the Work Capability Assessment to make sure that more people who have cancer get the support they need.

Consultation

This is when the government asks what people think about their plans, and for ideas about the best ways of doing things.

Work Capability Assessment

This is when people talk to a health expert about their health and how it affects them. This helps us work out if someone should get the Employment and Support Allowance.

Employment and Support Allowance

This is a benefit people can get if they do not have a job and they cannot work at all, or cannot work now but could work some time in the future.
What we found out

Professor Malcolm Harrington and Macmillan Cancer Support looked at how the Work Capability Assessment deals with people who have cancer.

They found out that at the moment, some types of treatment for cancer are treated differently to others because they may not make the person as weak as other types of treatment.

This means that some people who have cancer do not get the help and support they need.
Work Capability Assessment

Professor Malcolm Harrington and Macmillan Cancer Support say that people should not be treated differently just because of the type of treatment they are getting.

The government wants to make sure that people get the help and support they need. But at the moment some people who get treatment for cancer could be made to look for some kind of work instead of being made part of the Support Group of the Employment and Support Allowance.

**Support Group**

This is a group of people who will not be expected to work but can get help to find work if they want it.
Taking the effects of cancer treatment into account

The Support Group and work

For many people, an important part of their treatment and recovery from cancer is seeing that they will be able to carry on in work or that they will be able to go back to work.

We do not want to stop people from going back to work. So we have some ideas that could let more people get help from the Support Group of the Employment and Support Allowance and also let those people who can and want to do some work to keep working.
These ideas assume that people who are getting treatment for cancer should be put in the Support Group for the Employment and Support Allowance.

People should be able to join the Support Group for the Employment and Support Allowance if they get a letter from their doctor or a cancer specialist. The letter must say that they have cancer and what treatment they are getting.

If the person does not have a letter, the Department for Work and Pensions may be able to get the details from the person’s doctor or cancer specialist.
Taking the effects of cancer treatment into account

About the government’s ideas

The government has come up with ideas for making the way the Work Capability Assessment deals with people who have cancer better.

The changes we want to make include thinking about putting the following people into the Support Group for the Employment and Support Allowance.

• People who are waiting for, getting or recovering from oral chemotherapy. Except when they have been getting this treatment for more than 6 months.

• People who are waiting for, getting or recovering from combined chemo-irradiation.

• People who are waiting for, getting or recovering from radiotherapy in the head and neck, brain, lung, gastrointestinal or pelvic area.
Work Capability Assessment

We think that people who are waiting for, getting or recovering from these treatments should be in the Support Group for the Employment and Support Allowance. They would just need to provide information to prove the treatment, like a letter from a doctor or a cancer specialist.

Macmillan Cancer Support say that people who have these treatments should be put straight into the Support Group for the Employment and Support Allowance.

We think that most people should go into the Support Group for the Employment and Support Allowance. We think it is right to look at how cancer treatment affects each person.

We think that this will make sure that decisions are based on what each person can do.
Taking the effects of cancer treatment into account

About this consultation

We would like to hear from everyone who is interested in our plans.

• Any person who has cancer or has had cancer and their families and carers.

• Doctors, nurses and cancer specialists.

• Employers, especially if they have supported workers during treatment for cancer.

Employers

This is a person or company that pays other people to do work for them.
About the questions

On the next few pages there are questions that we would like you to give us your answers to.

This consultation started on 16 December 2011 and will end on 9 March 2012.

Send your replies to

Work Capability Assessment Policy Team
Floor 2, Section B
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NA

Or you can email your reply to
WCA.team@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

And finally, thank you

Thank you for taking the time to look at this booklet and taking part in the consultation.
Taking the effects of cancer treatment into account

Questions

Question 1

Do you think that the group of treatments shown on page 6 covers all the cancer treatments that should be included?
Work Capability Assessment

Question 2

If the effects of the cancer treatment do not weaken the person, do you think we should expect that person to go back to work or to keep on working?
Taking the effects of cancer treatment into account

Question 3

Because some cancer treatments do not badly affect some people, how important do you think it is for some people to be able to work?
Work Capability Assessment

Question 4a

Do you agree that the weakening effects of cancer treatments can be different from person to person?
Taking the effects of cancer treatment into account

Question 4b

Do you think that some people who are being treated or have been treated for cancer are able to keep working or to go back to some kind of work?
Question 5a

How important to you and your family was work during treatment for cancer or when you were getting better after the treatment?
Question 5b
If you want to, could you please tell us about your treatment and how it affected your ability to work.
Work Capability Assessment

Question 6

Are you able to tell us about any support you have offered or given to workers who are being treated for cancer? For example, flexible working or making changes in the workplace.
Question 7

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?
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Employment and Support Allowance
This is a benefit people can get if they do not have a job and they cannot work at all, or cannot work now but could work some time in the future. 4

Support Group
This is a group of people who will not be expected to work but can get help to find work if they want it. 6

Work Capability Assessment
This is when people talk to a health expert about their health and how it affects them. This helps us work out if someone should get the Employment and Support Allowance. 4
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