

Withdrawn

This publication is withdrawn.
The publication is no longer current.

Employment and Support Allowance

Please read this leaflet carefully. It gives you more information about Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and tells you:

- about the support we can offer you; and
- what you need to do while you're claiming ESA

For more information about ESA, please visit **www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance**

If you don't have access to the internet, you could ask your family or someone you know if you can use their internet connection. You can also get access to the internet in your local Jobcentre Plus office or library.

If you've any questions about this leaflet or you need it in Braille, large print, audio or email please contact us on:

- telephone: **0800 169 0310**
- textphone: **0800 169 0314**
- Welsh language: **0800 328 1744**

Calls to 0800 numbers are free from landlines and mobiles.

jobcentreplus

Department for
Work and Pensions

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About your ESA claim

What you'll be paid when you first make your claim

There are two types of ESA:

- Contribution-based ESA
- Income-related ESA

You could get both depending on your circumstances. You only pay tax, if it's due, on Contribution-based ESA.



For more information about benefits that you pay tax on, please visit www.gov.uk/income-tax/taxfree-and-taxable-state-benefits



For more information on the two types of ESA, please visit www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/what-youll-get

When you make a claim for ESA, you'll normally be paid the assessment rate until we assess how your disability, illness or health condition affects your day to day life.



The assessment rate can be found at www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/what-youll-get

We'll pay your ESA payment into the bank or building society account that you told us about when you made your ESA claim. You'll be paid every 2 weeks.

What you need to do

Sending us your Statements of Fitness for Work

Please keep sending us your Statements of Fitness for Work (sometimes called fit notes, sick notes or medical certificates) until we ask you not to. You'll find the postal address at the top of your letters. They could take 7 days to reach us by post.

Please don't take them into a Jobcentre Plus office.



You may not get your full ESA payments and/or National Insurance credits if you don't send your statements in on time.

Tell Jobcentre Plus if anything changes

It's important that you tell Jobcentre Plus **straight away** about any changes that could change the amount of ESA you get. The quickest and easiest way to do this is to call on **0800 169 0310**.

You must let Jobcentre Plus know if:

- your personal details change
- you have a new health condition, or your existing condition gets better or worse
- you or your partner's work situation changes
- there are changes to your pension, savings, investments or property
- the amount of money coming into your house changes
- there are changes to who lives in your house
- you are involved in a trade dispute, or cannot work because of a trade dispute
- you go into or leave hospital if your stay is for more than 4 weeks
- you go into prison or legal custody
- you go abroad or are about to go abroad
- your partner dies

If we've paid you less ESA than we should, we'll pay you this money, including any arrears due.

What you need to do continued

If you don't tell Jobcentre Plus straight away if anything changes, then you could be paid the wrong amount of ESA.

You may have to:

- pay back any money you're overpaid
- pay a financial penalty
- go to court



For more information about benefit overpayments, please visit www.gov.uk/benefit-overpayments

What happens next

Your health and work conversation

You may get an appointment to go to a health and work conversation. The health and work conversation is a type of work focused interview. This isn't your Work Capability Assessment.

The conversation isn't about you looking or applying for work now, it's about helping you get into work when you're able to in the future. It can help you get to know your work coach and plan simple steps to help build your confidence and motivation.



Your ESA payments may be reduced if you don't go to and take part in your health and work conversation, and you don't have a good reason.

Your Work Capability Assessment

The Work Capability Assessment helps us find out how your disability, illness or health condition affects your day to day life, and if you could do some type of work now or in the future. This could include work you haven't thought about before.

What happens next continued

Your Work Capability Assessment continued

You'll need to take part in a Work Capability Assessment to help us decide if you can keep getting ESA. There are 2 stages to the assessment:

- Stage 1** We'll send you a Capability for Work questionnaire (ESA50) a few weeks after you make your claim. You'll need to fill in the questionnaire and send it back to the Health Assessment Advisory Service. If you need to, you can ask somebody to help you fill it in.
- Stage 2** You may be asked to go to a face-to-face appointment with a qualified healthcare professional. This will be either a nurse, a doctor, a physiotherapist or an occupational therapist.



To keep getting your ESA payments you'll have to complete both stages of your Work Capability Assessment if we ask you to.



You can find more information about the Work Capability Assessment, claiming back expenses and watch a video example of an assessment at www.chdauk.co.uk

If we can pay you after your Work Capability Assessment

If we can pay you ESA following your assessment, you'll be placed into one of the following groups. The groups are called the work-related activity group and the support group.

Work-related activity group

The work-related activity group is for ESA claimants who we accept have limits on things they can do, including working, because of their disability, illness or health condition.

You'll have appointments with a work coach who will agree with you what activities you'll do. This will help you to have a better chance of moving closer to working when you're able to.

There's support available to help you get into work when you're able to in the future. We can give you support to help you build up your skills, help build your confidence and help you to start thinking about the types of work you could do.

If you don't go to your appointments or take part in your agreed activities, your ESA payments could be reduced. We call this a sanction.



Your ESA payments could be reduced if you don't do your work-related activities.



For more information about sanctions, please visit www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/what-youll-get

After the medical assessment

Support group

Being in the support group means you won't have to go to meetings with a work coach or take part in activities to help you get into work.

You don't have to look for work or do any work-related activities while you are in the support group but there is support you can get if you wanted to. If you did want to, you could speak with a work coach who can help you get training to learn new skills, or help you write your CV. A CV shows a possible employer what skills and experience you have.

You may find this support helpful if there's a change or improvement in your disability, illness or health condition.

Once you've been placed in a group we'll send a letter to your doctor letting them know we don't need any more Statements of Fitness for Work.

If we can't pay you ESA after your assessment

If we think that your disability, illness or health condition doesn't limit your ability to work so much that you can't work, we'll call you to check that we've considered all of the available evidence.

If we decide you're able to work, we'll send you a letter letting you know when your ESA payments will stop and why we can't keep paying you ESA.

We'll also send a letter to your doctor letting them know we don't need any more Statements of Fitness for Work.



If we decide we can't pay you ESA you may be able to get other benefits, including Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit. For more information, please visit www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators

If we can't pay you ESA after your assessment continued

If you don't agree with our decision not to pay you or with the group you've been put in you can ask us to explain why.

You, or someone who has the authority to act for you, can phone or write to us within one month of the date on your decision letter to ask us to explain our decision in writing.

You can also ask us to reconsider our decision.

Tell us if:

- you think we've overlooked information, or
- you've more information which may change the decision

You must do this within one month of the date on your decision letter.

When we've looked at what you've told us, we'll send you a letter to tell you what we've decided and why. We call this letter a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice.

How to appeal

If you disagree with the Mandatory Reconsideration, you can appeal to an independent tribunal. You must wait for the Mandatory Reconsideration Notice before you start an appeal.



For more information about appealing a decision, please visit www.gov.uk/social-security-child-support-tribunal

Help to get a job if you're disabled

Work Choice

Work Choice is a programme that can help you get and keep a job if you're disabled and find it hard to work. It's up to you if you want to take part in Work Choice - you don't have to do it.

Work Choice is run by different providers depending on where you live. The type of support you get depends on the help you need. You don't have to be getting benefits to apply for this.



For more information about Work Choice please visit www.gov.uk/work-choice

You may be able to work and still claim ESA

Permitted work

You may be able to do some work and still get ESA payments. This is called permitted work and it lets you:

- work for less than 16 hours each week
- earn up to £125.50 **every week**, after tax
- get your normal amount of benefit
- build up your skills and experience
- do voluntary work - there is no limit on how many hours per week you can do voluntary work for

From April 2017 there is no limit on the number of weeks you can do permitted work for.

Before you start any work, whether paid or unpaid, you must fill in a PW1 and send it to the Jobcentre Plus office that deals with your benefit.

The quickest and easiest way to get a copy of the PW1 is to visit www.gov.uk and search for PW1. Or, please call Jobcentre Plus on **0800 169 0310** for a copy.

You may be able to work and still claim ESA continued

Permitted work continued



For more information about permitted work please talk to your work coach or visit www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/eligibility



You can search for a job through DWP's Find a job at www.gov.uk/jobsearch

More information

Other help and support you may be able to get:

Money Advice Service can help you manage your money. They offer free independent advice about how to make the best of your money, including budgeting, dealing with debt and saving money on your household bills. Please visit www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk

Universal Credit has started to replace some benefits with a single monthly payment if you're out of work or on a low income. To find out how Universal Credit affects people with a disability or health condition please visit www.gov.uk/government/publications/universal-credit-if-you-have-a-disability-or-health-condition-quick-guide

Access to Work is a grant that can pay for practical support if you have a disability, or have a physical or mental health condition to help you start or stay in work. Please visit www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a benefit to help towards some of the extra costs you may have because of your disability or health condition. Please visit www.gov.uk/pip

More information continued

Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit is a benefit for people who became disabled due to an accident at work or because of an industrial disease. Please visit www.gov.uk/industrial-injuries-disablement-benefit

Mortgage Interest Payments are payments that could help towards your interest payments. Please visit www.gov.uk/support-for-mortgage-interest

Child Tax Credits could be paid if you're responsible for a child or young person under the age of 20. Please visit www.gov.uk/child-tax-credit

Housing Benefit can help to pay the rent for your home. Please contact your local council and visit www.gov.uk/housing-benefit

Council Tax Reduction is help to pay for your council tax. Please contact your local council and visit www.gov.uk/apply-council-tax-reduction

Prescriptions, glasses and dental treatment – you may be able to get help to pay for these. Please visit www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health

Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments – you may be able to get help with your heating bills. Please visit www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment and www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment