



The Work Capability Assessment

A call for evidence – tell us what you think. Year 5 report

June 2014



Easy Read



Department
for Work &
Pensions

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 purple** 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.

Contents

What this booklet is about	5
A message from Doctor Litchfield	7
What you need to know	9
Employment and Support Allowance	9
Work Capability Assessment	9
Claiming Employment and Support Allowance	10
What has already changed?	11
Questions for people replying for themselves	12
Question 1	12
Question 2	12
Questions 3a and 3b	13
Question 4	14
Question 5	14
Questions 6a and 6b	15
Questions 7a and 7b	16
Questions 8a and 8b	17

Questions for people replying for a group	18
Question 9.....	18
Question 10	19
Question 11	19
Question 12	20
Question 13a	20
Questions 13b and 14a	21
Questions 14b and 15a	22
Questions 15b, 16a and 16b.....	23
Questions 16c and 17a.....	24
Questions 17b and 17c.....	25
How to send us your reply.....	26
Word list	27

What this booklet is about

The Department for Work and Pensions has asked Doctor Litchfield to look again at how well the **Work Capability Assessment** is working and then write a report.

Work Capability Assessment

This is when people talk to a health expert about their health and how it affects them. And if they are ready to move into work or if they should get **Employment and Support Allowance**.

Employment and Support Allowance

This is a benefit for disabled people and people who have a health condition. People will get this benefit 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.

Doctor Litchfield was asked to write the report because he does not work for the Department for Work and Pensions and he is an expert on the health of people at work.



There have been 4 reports about the **Work Capability Assessment** before this one.

- The first 3 reports were written by Professor Harrington.
- Report number 4 was written by Doctor Litchfield.

The government said there would be 5 reports about how well the **Work Capability Assessment** is working. Doctor Litchfield's new report will be report number 5.

The Department for Work and Pensions will send Doctor Litchfield's report to Parliament before the end of 2014.

This booklet is for people and groups who can tell Doctor Litchfield about

- how well the **Work Capability Assessment** is working.
- how the **Work Capability Assessment** could be made better.

Asking people about the **Work Capability Assessment** is just one of the ways Doctor Litchfield will find out about how well it is working.



A message from Doctor Litchfield

The report I am writing will add to the information collected in the first 4 reports about the **Work Capability Assessment**. I hope it will help make the **Work Capability Assessment** better.

The questions in this booklet ask people and groups to

- tell me about how the **Work Capability Assessment** has changed as a result of the first 4 reviews.
- tell me how they have been affected by
 - the **Work Capability Assessment**.
 - joining the **Work related activity group**.

Work related activity group

This is a group of people who get **Employment and Support Allowance** and who may be able to work in the future. They will get help to become ready for work.

- joining the **Support group**.

Support group

This is a group of people who get **Employment and Support Allowance** and who are not expected to work. But they can get help to find work if they want it.

- tell me how they have been affected by
 - mental health conditions.

Mental health conditions

These are feelings that make people feel unhappy or behave in a way that has a bad effect on the way they want to live their lives. These difficulties are caused by many different things.

- learning difficulties.

When answering the questions in this booklet, I want people to tell me what has actually happened to themselves or other people in their group.



I look forward to hearing what you have to say. The replies will help us look at what the **Work Capability Assessment** does well and what it could do better. The replies are important because the **Work Capability Assessment** affects many people's lives

What you need to know

Employment and Support Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance began in October 2008. It is for people who cannot work or cannot look for work because of a disability or health condition.

People who get **Employment and Support Allowance** are split into two groups – the **Support group** and the **Work related activity group**. These two groups are explained on page 7.

Work Capability Assessment

The **Work Capability Assessment** is a test that looks at a person's health and whether they can work. It looks at what a person **can** do in work, not what they **cannot** do.

The Department for Work and Pensions uses the **Work Capability Assessment** to decide

- if a person can work straight away.
- if a person cannot work because of a disability or health condition.
- if the person cannot work, whether they should be put into the **Support group** or the **Work related activity group**.

If the result of the **Work Capability Assessment** is that the person can work straight away, they can claim Jobseeker's Allowance.

Claiming Employment and Support Allowance

People who want to claim **Employment and Support Allowance** must contact the Department for Work and Pensions for a claim form.

The claim form asks the person to explain how their disability or health condition affects the way they can or cannot do some things that most people do every day.

Most people who claim **Employment and Support Allowance** have a meeting with someone from Atos Healthcare. The Atos Healthcare worker asks questions about what the person wrote on the claim form.



Atos Healthcare then send a report about the meeting to the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Department for Work and Pensions uses the information in the report to help them make a decision on the person's claim.

What has already changed?

The **Work Capability Assessment** has already changed because of what was said in the first 4 reports. Here are 2 examples of the changes.

- If a person is not likely to get **Employment and Support Allowance**, someone from the Department for Work and Pensions will phone them to explain the decision.
- When a person in the **Work related activity group** needs to visit the Department for Work and Pensions to talk about looking for work, someone will phone them before the interview to explain what will happen and how important it is to attend.

Last year the Department for Work and Pensions made another change to the **Work Capability Assessment**.

Because of this change, if someone is not happy with the decision on their **Employment and Support Allowance** claim, they must ask for a **mandatory reconsideration** before they can **appeal**.

Mandatory reconsideration

This happens when someone thinks the decision on their claim is wrong. Before they can **appeal**, another person from the Department for Work and Pensions must check their claim to make sure the first decision was right.

Appeal

This is when someone asks a group of people who do not work for the Department for Work and Pensions to look at the decision on their claim to make sure it is right.

Questions for people replying for themselves

Questions 1 to 8b are for people who are replying only for themselves. If you are replying for a group, please go to page 18.

Question 1

If you have been to a **Work Capability Assessment**, please tick one box to show why you were there.

- ☐ I had claimed **Employment and Support Allowance**.
- ☐ A friend or relative had claimed **Employment and Support Allowance**.
- ☐ I work with people who go to **Work Capability Assessments**.
- ☐ I work for Atos Healthcare.

Question 2

If you have been to a **Work Capability Assessment** either for yourself or with someone else, how old was the person claiming **Employment and Support Allowance**?

Your answer

Question 3a

Do the people who go to a **Work Capability Assessment** have all the information they need about what's going to happen there and what they need to do?

Your answer

☐

Yes

☐

No

Question 3b

If you answered **No** at Question 3a, what extra information do you think is needed?

Your answer

Question 4

This question is only for the following people.

- People who were told they could not get **Employment and Support Allowance** after their **Work Capability Assessment** and claimed Jobseeker's Allowance instead.

or

- People who were put in the **Work related activity group** after their **Work Capability Assessment**.

Is there any help or support that would have made things easier for you to deal with the decision you received?

Your answer

Question 5

This question is only for people whose claim for **Employment and Support Allowance** has been looked at again because of the new **mandatory reconsideration** rules.

Can you tell us about what happened while your claim was being looked at again? We want to hear about any good things that happened and about any bad things that happened.

Your answer

Question 6a

Does any part of the **Work Capability Assessment** need to be made better?

Your answer

☐

Yes

☐

No

Question 6b

If you answered **Yes** at Question 6a, what would you change and how would your change make the **Work Capability Assessment** better?

Your answer

Question 7a

Which parts of the Work Capability Assessment work well?

Your answer

Question 7b

Do you have any ideas for making these parts of the Work Capability Assessment even better?

Your answer

Question 8a

This question is only for people who claimed **Employment and Support Allowance** because they have a serious **mental health condition** or a learning difficulty.

Did the **Work Capability Assessment** work well for you?

Your answer

☐

Yes

☐

No

Question 8b

This question is only for people who claimed **Employment and Support Allowance** because they have a serious **mental health condition** or a learning difficulty.

Please tell us what you think about the **Work Capability Assessment** and what could be made better.

Your answer

Questions for people replying for a group

Questions 9 to 17c are for people who are replying for a group. For example, disability groups, charities and support groups. If you are replying only for yourself, please go to page 12.

If you can, please support your replies with examples of things that have happened to you or people in your group.

Question 9

The **Work Capability Assessment** has been changed as a result of the first 4 reports.

Can you tell us about how the people in your group have been affected by the changes to the **Work Capability Assessment**? We want to hear about any good things that happened and about any bad things that happened.

Your answer

Question 10

Doctor Litchfield said in report number 4 that the Department for Work and Pensions should look again at their forms and letters about the **Work Capability Assessment**. This was because he thought they could be better.

Does your group have any good ideas about how the forms and letters about the **Work Capability Assessment** could be made better? Please tell us which forms and letters your group's ideas are about.

Your answer

Question 11

Do the people in your group think there is enough information about what the Department for Work and Pensions expects people to do before, during and after their **Work Capability Assessment**?

For example, is there enough information about **mandatory reconsiderations**, or what people need to do if they are put in the **Work related activity group**?

Your answer

Question 12

Please tell us what the people in your group think about **mandatory reconsideration**. For example, is it working well or not well.

Your answer

Question 13a

Do the people in your group think that any part of the **Work Capability Assessment** needs to be made better?

Your answer

☐

Yes

☐

No

Question 13b

If you answered **Yes** at Question 13a, what would the people in your group change and how would their changes make the **Work Capability Assessment** better?

Your answer

Question 14a

Which parts of the **Work Capability Assessment** do the people in your group think work well?

Your answer

Question 14b

Do the people in your group have any ideas for making these parts of the **Work Capability Assessment** even better? Please say how your group's ideas will make the **Work Capability Assessment** better?

Your answer

Question 15a

After the **Work Capability Assessment**, people may be put into the **Work related activity group** or the **Support group**.

Do the people in your group think the **Work Capability Assessment** is a good way of making sure people are put into the right group?

Your answer

☐

Yes

☐

No

Question 15b

If you answered **No** at Question 15a, what does your group think makes it hard to get this decision right?

Your answer

Question 16a

Do the people in your group think the **Work Capability Assessment** is good at picking out which people have a serious **mental health condition** or a serious learning difficulty?

Your answer

☐

Yes

☐

No

Question 16b

Please give examples from people in your group about how the **Work Capability Assessment** did this well or did not do it well.

Your answer

Question 16c

Which parts of the **Work Capability Assessment** do the people in your group think help or make it hard to pick out which people have a serious **mental health condition** or a serious learning difficulty?

Your answer

Question 17a

This question is only for people in your group who have a serious **mental health condition** or a serious learning difficulty.

Is any part of the **Work Capability Assessment** very hard to understand?

Your answer

☐

Yes

☐

No

Question 17b

This question is only for people in your group who have a serious **mental health condition** or a serious learning difficulty.

Is any part of the **Work Capability Assessment** very good at supporting people with serious **mental health conditions** or serious learning difficulties?

Your answer

☐

Yes

☐

No

Question 17c

This question is only for people in your group who have a serious **mental health condition** or a serious learning difficulty.

Thinking about your answers to Questions 17a and 17b, how could the **Work Capability Assessment** be made better?

Your answer

How to send us your reply

You can send us your reply in 3 different ways.

- 1 You can visit our website and fill in a form. Go to

www.gov.uk/government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/improving-the-work-capability-assessment

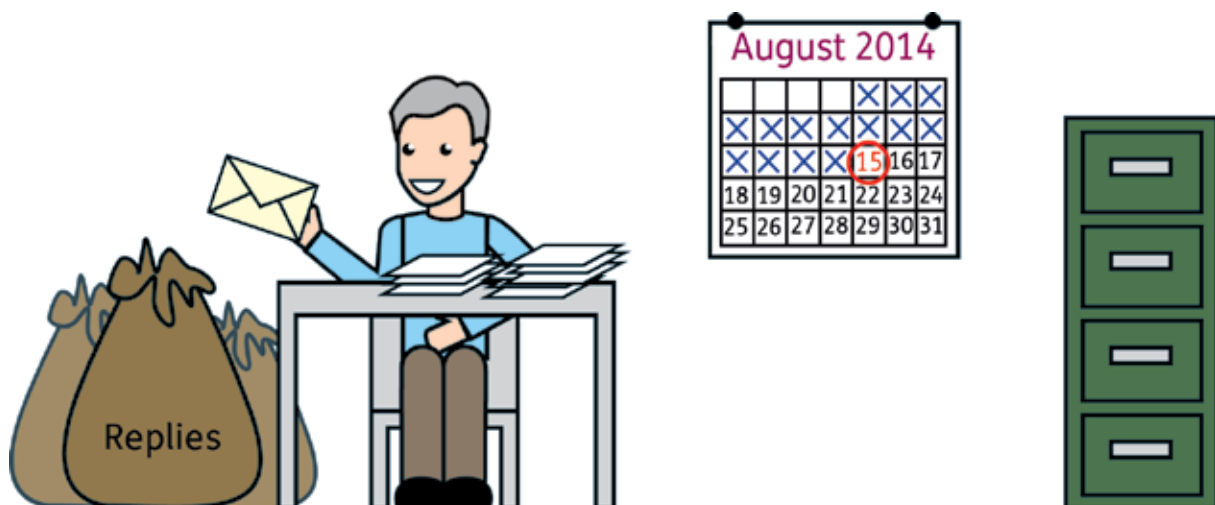
- 2 You can send an email to wca.evidence@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

or

- 3 You can send your reply or questions by post to

WCA Independent Review Team
Floor 3, Section E
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NA

Please make sure your reply reaches us by **15 August 2014**.



Word list

Appeal

This is when someone asks a group of people who do not work for the Department for Work and Pensions to look at the decision on their claim to make sure it is right11

Employment and Support Allowance

This is a benefit for disabled people and people who have a health condition. People will get this benefit if they do not have a job and they cannot work at all, or cannot work now but could work some time in the future5

Mandatory reconsideration

This happens when someone thinks the decision on their claim is wrong. Before they can **appeal**, another person from the Department for Work and Pensions must check their claim to make sure the first decision was right.....11

Mental health condition

These are feelings that make people feel unhappy or behave in a way that has a bad effect on the way they want to live their lives. These difficulties are caused by many different things8

Support group

This is a group of people who get **Employment and Support Allowance** and who are not expected to work. But they can get help to find work if they want it7

Work Capability Assessment

This is when people talk to a health expert about their health and how it affects them. And if they are ready to move into work or if they should get **Employment and Support Allowance**5

Work related activity group

This is a group of people who get **Employment and Support Allowance** and who may be able to work in the future. They will get help to become ready for work7

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psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

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