

Reassessment of incapacity benefits



jobcentreplus

Part of the Department
for Work and Pensions

What are the changes and when are they taking place?

Employment and Support Allowance is replacing Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support paid on the grounds of illness or disability.

Jobcentre Plus will reassess most people on incapacity benefits, using the Work Capability Assessment, to assess their capability to work. In Cornwall this will take place between 28th February 2011 and and Spring 2014

Those assessed fully capable of work will be invited to make a claim to Jobseeker's Allowance, be able to claim Income Support (if they are entitled under a different condition of entitlement) or will move off benefit. Those who cannot work or have limited capability to work will move to Employment and Support Allowance.

How will this affect customers?

- Customers will be referred to ATOS Healthcare, our medical services provider, for consideration of a Work Capability Assessment. The assessment will concentrate on what people can do rather than only focusing on what they can't.
- Customers will continue to receive their current benefit (subject to continuing to satisfy the conditions of entitlement) until a decision is made on their case upon receipt of the Work Capability Assessment outcome.

Why are we reassessing incapacity benefits customers?

- It has always been the intention to replace the current working age incapacity benefits, once Employment and Support Allowance was established.
- There are over two and a half million people on incapacity benefits. We know that many of them, with the right support, could and indeed do, want to work.
- Moving people onto Employment and Support Allowance and Jobseeker's Allowance will mean they get the right help and support to find work more quickly

Concentrating on what people can do rather than only focusing on what they can't

There is growing evidence that work can:

- promote recovery from both mental and physical health problems
- minimise the risk of the physical, mental and social effects of long-term unemployment such as social exclusion and poverty

Source - Black: Carol, 'Working for a Healthier Tomorrow, Review of the Health of Britain's Working Population': 2008

Cornwall

Volumes of IB / ESA Customers at May 2010

Jobcentre Site	Total	Incapacity Benefit	SDA	Mental	Nervous System	Respiratory Circulatory	Musculoskeletal	Injury, poisoning	Other
Bude	565	510	55	215	50	35	110	30	125
Launceston	820	690	130	315	65	40	160	50	190
Bodmin	1,605	1,410	195	590	130	95	315	120	355
Liskeard	2,110	1,870	240	800	175	140	395	140	460
Newquay	1,290	1,160	130	550	95	85	230	75	255
St Austell	2,685	2,370	315	1,025	215	160	490	170	625
East Cornwall	9,075	8,010	1,065	3,495	730	555	1,700	585	2,010
Penryn	1,270	1,150	120	565	110	70	190	75	260
Helston	1,060	955	105	380	90	65	245	60	220
Penzance	2,855	2,575	280	1,145	220	165	520	185	620
Redruth	3,130	2,800	330	1,355	210	150	585	170	660
Truro	1,345	1,165	180	590	135	55	215	70	280
West Cornwall	9,660	8,645	1,015	4,035	765	505	1,755	560	2,040
Cornwall	18,735	16,655	2,080	7,530	1,495	1,060	3,455	1,145	4,050
Devon & Cornwall	58,670	51,395	7,275	25,430	4,385	3,295	9,790	3,055	12,715

Understanding our customers

Customer group	Average duration on Incapacity benefits	Proportion of reassessment population
Aged 35-55 with other physical conditions	7.7 years	18%
Men aged 55-60	8.6 years	9%
Aged 35-55 with musculo-skeletal conditions	7.8 years	9%
Aged under 35	5.7 years	12%
Aged 35-55 with mental conditions	7.8 years	24%
< 5 years from state pension age	9.7 years	5%
IB Youth and SDA claimants	11.7 years	15%
Over 15 years on incapacity benefits	16 years	8%

WCA changes

- DWP is committed to continuously improving the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) to ensure that it is as fair and accurate as possible.
- Professor Malcolm Harrington, a highly respected Occupational Physician, carried out the first Independent review, reporting in November 2010. We fully endorse his review and have committed to implementing his recommendations as quickly as possible.
- He found WCA is the right process, but **it is not working as fairly or effectively as it should do.**
- Key recommendations:
 - **improve the capability and confidence of Decision Makers in Jobcentre Plus benefit delivery centres who decide benefit entitlements**
 - **Make the WCA a more compassionate process**
 - **Improve the medical assessment conducted by contractors Atos.**
- Professor Harrington has been appointed to conduct a second independent review of the WCA and provide further recommendations as appropriate.

When a decision has been made - Employment and Support Allowance

We are determined that the transition will run smoothly for all customers. For those who transfer to Employment and Support Allowance we will ensure that benefit payments are not disrupted.

No one moving from their existing benefit to Employment and Support Allowance will see a reduction in the level of their benefit entitlement at the point of change.

There are two groups in Employment and Support Allowance,

- Work Related Activity Group
- Support Group

Employment and Support Allowance – Work Related Activity Group

Work-Related Activity Group

- If a customer is placed in the Work-Related Activity Group, they will be expected to take part in work focused interviews with their personal adviser.
- They will get support to help them prepare for suitable work. In return, they will receive an additional payment on top of their basic rate of benefit
- If a customer refuses to co-operate in the Work Focused Interviews, it may affect their entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance.

Employment and Support Allowance - Support Group

Support Group

- Customers will not be expected to take part in any work related activity to receive their benefit, but they can do so on a voluntary basis if they want to.
- They will receive an additional support component to their payment on top of the basic rate of benefit.

When a decision has been made - Jobseeker's Allowance

If a customer is found capable of work they may be able to claim Jobseeker's Allowance.

There are two types of Jobseeker's Allowance:

- **Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance**
- **Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance**

When a decision has been made – Entitlement to Income Support on other grounds

Some customers who are found capable of work will be entitled to Income Support on other grounds. For example, if they have young children.

They will be given the option of continuing to claim Income Support, although the amount of benefit may change.

They will not need to make a new claim.

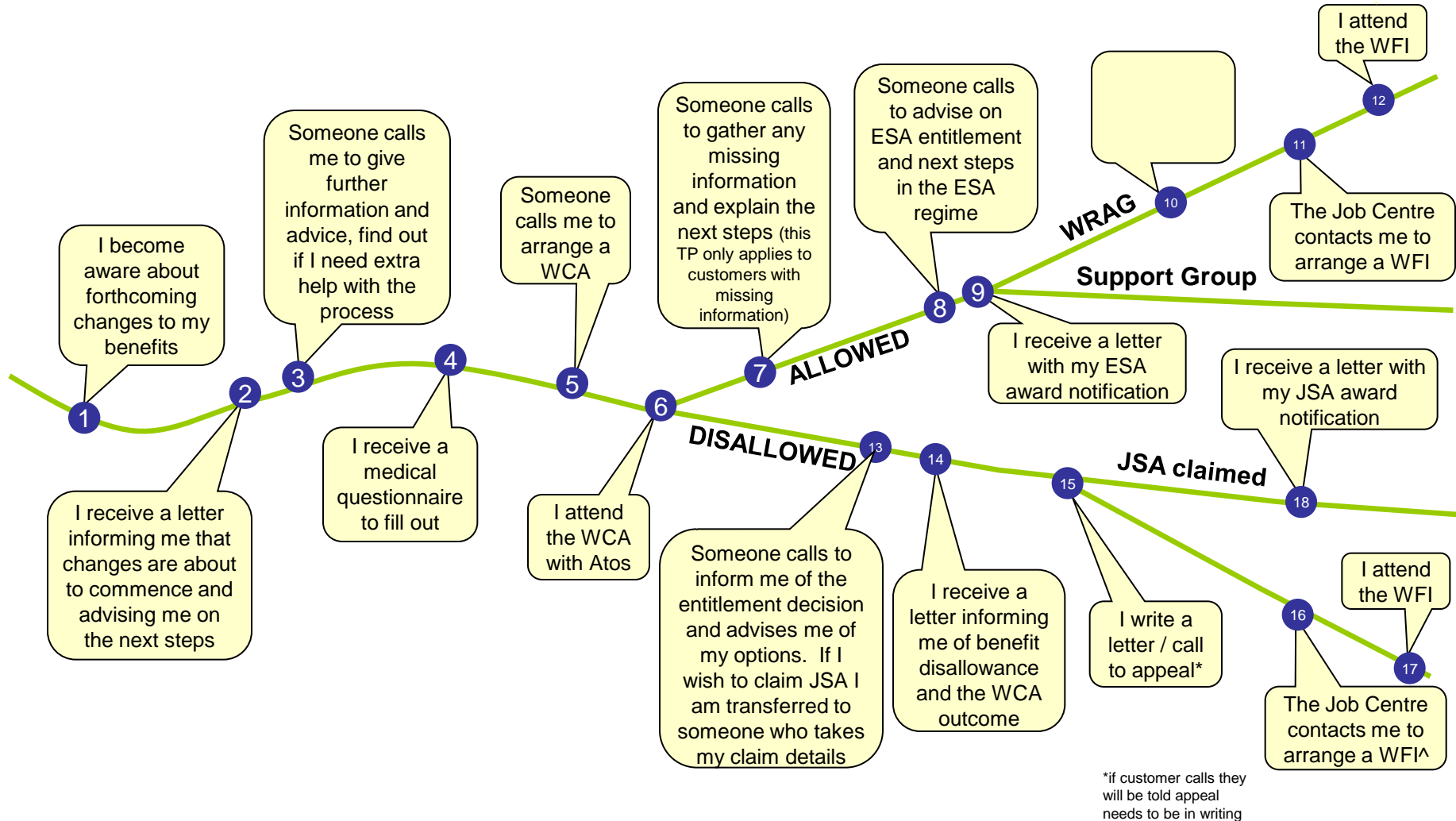
The customer journey, explained step by step

In response to feedback/lessons learnt from the implementation of Employment and Support Allowance, we have added additional contact points to the customer journey.

Simplifying the journey for the customer in this way, enables us to:

- provide further information to the customer at each step
- provide the customer with more opportunities to ask questions
- explain what will happen next so that they understand exactly where they are in the journey

Customer Journey Touchpoints



Devon and Cornwall Current ATOS healthcare centres

Barnstaple Medical Examination Centre

Princess House
Queen Street
Barnstaple
North Devon EX32 8HD

Launceston Medical Examination Centre

Launceston General Hospital
Link Road
Launceston
Cornwall PL15 9JD

Exeter Medical Examination Centre

Ground Floor
Killerton House
Park 5 Harrier Way
Exeter EX2 7HU

Truro Medical Examination Centre

Pydar House
Pydar Street
Truro TR1 2BF

Plymouth Medical Examination Centre

Argosy House
Longbridge Road
Plympton PL6 8LS

Table discussions

Please consider the following

1. What are your main areas of concern, within your work place/delivery?
2. What further information would be of use?
3. What kind of support do you feel these customers may need in the future?
4. What kind of support will your organization require?

And finally

What positives can we offer now in how we will/can support these customers?

Further information and useful contacts



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We have also developed information that our customers and stakeholders can access direct. This includes a page on [Directgov](#) and information on the [DWP Adviser](#) webpage.



DWP Department for
Work and Pensions

Directgov

Public services all in one place

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit calculations may be affected by reassessment.

- Customers moving to income-related benefits will receive maximum eligible help with rent and council tax.
- Customers moving off benefits will be contacted by the Local Authority to review their entitlement to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.
- For customers moving to contributory Employment and Support Allowance (paid without income-related ESA) from IB/SDA (paid without Income Support) any disability premium will be removed from the Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit calculation and replaced by either the work-related activity component or the support component.
 - Where the Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit amount increases, the higher amount will be awarded immediately.
 - Where the Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit amount decreases, a transitional addition will be awarded to protect the overall benefit income.
 - Customers appealing a decision not to award Employment and Support Allowance who are paid contributory Employment and Support Allowance pending the appeal hearing will also have their Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit entitlement transitionally protected whilst their appeal is processed.

Social Fund Changes

- Changes to the Crisis Loan rules are being introduced from 4 April 2011. The three planned changes to the Crisis Loan system will mean that the Department will:
 - No longer pay Crisis Loans for items including cookers and beds.
 - Reduce the daily rate paid for living expenses from 75% down to 60% of benefit rate.
 - Restrict Crisis Loan awards for living expenses in a rolling twelve-month period to a maximum of three.
- This will ensure funding for Community Care Grants is protected and that DWP is able to pay Budgeting Loans throughout the year.