

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

From 27 October 2008 Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) replaces Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Income Support (IS) paid on incapacity grounds for new customers.

The principle of Employment and Support Allowance is that everyone should have the opportunity to work and that people with an illness or disability should get the support they need to engage in appropriate work, if they are able.

In Great Britain, over 2.6 million people depend on incapacity benefits, and yet nine out of ten new customers say that they want to return to work.

There is a body of evidence that people are better off in work – not only financially, but in terms of their health and well-being, their self-esteem and the future prospects for themselves and their family.

The key things you need to know about Employment and Support Allowance.

New Customers Only

For new customers, Employment and Support Allowance will replace Incapacity Benefit and Income Support paid on incapacity grounds. Existing Incapacity Benefit or Income Support customers will initially continue to receive their existing benefits, so long as they satisfy the entitlement conditions.

How Customers Can Make a Claim

To start their claim, most customers just need to make a single phone call to **Job Centre Plus** on **0800 055 66 88**, with no initial claim forms to complete or sign.

Customers with speech or hearing difficulties can contact **Job Centre Plus** using a **Textphone** on **0800 023 48 88**.

Calls to 0800 numbers are free from BT landlines but you may have to pay if you use another phone company, a mobile phone, or if you are calling from abroad.

Customers unable to claim by phone can claim via a representative or interpreter, by completing a printed claim form or face-to-face through most Job Centres.

Personalised Support

Employment and Support Allowance offers personalised support and financial help if people are not working due to an illness or disability. It gives people access to a specially trained personal adviser and a wide range of further services.

Medical Assessment

Central to Employment and Support Allowance are the new medical assessments which examine what people can do, rather than what they can't, and identify what personal support they might need.

Work-Focused Interviews

Most people claiming Employment and Support Allowance will be expected to take appropriate steps to help prepare for work, including attending a series of work-focused interviews with a personal adviser.

Support Group

Under Employment and Support Allowance people with an illness or disability that means they are unable to undertake any form of work-related activity will get increased financial support and will not be expected to prepare for a return to work.

Information on the ESA can be found at www.dwp.gov.uk/esa

Further advice can be sought from your local Citizen's Advice Bureau, Job Centre Plus or Community Legal Advice.

Community Legal Advice: 0845 345 4345

Citizen's Advice Bureaux

Bromsgrove: 01527 831480
Redditch: 0845 415 2221
Wyre Forest: 01562 823953

Job Centre Plus

Bromsgrove 01527 483600
Redditch 01527 483900
Kidderminster 01562 623800

Job Centre Plus - Disability Employment Advisers

Bromsgrove 01527 483652
Redditch 01527 483999
Kidderminster 01562 623822

No responsibility is accepted for the level of service provided by the organisations listed in this publication. All details are correct at time of publication. However, if you find any information is inaccurate or out-of-date, please call us.