

After your medical

Once your self-assessment form and the report from your medical are with the DWP, they decide if you have **limited capability for work**.

If you are found **fit for work**, your **ESA claim ends**. If you get **Universal Credit**, your claim does not end but your **Claimant Commitment changes** so you have to look for work.

If you disagree with this decision, you have **one calendar month** to ask for it to be reconsidered.

Not 'Fit for Work'

If they accept you have limited capability for work, the DWP put you into one of two groups.

The Work-Related Activity Group

If you are put in the WRAG you will usually have to go to **work-focussed interviews** at the Job Centre, to discuss work you may be able to do with support, and may be sent on **courses and work experience**, although these are not happening at the moment.

If your claim started **before 3rd April 2017** and you are already in the WRAG, you may be getting a **work-related activity component** with your ESA or UC.

If your claim started **after 3rd April 2017**, you do not get this extra payment.



The Support Group

If the DWP decides you cannot cope with work-related activity, you are put in the **Support Group**.

You qualify for a **support component** with New-style and income-related ESA, and an **enhanced disability premium** if you get income-related ESA. You get a **limited capability for work-related activity element** with your Universal Credit.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council treat people in the ESA Support Group as severely disabled and work their **Council Tax Support** out more generously, so make sure you let them know.

Reassessment

Your claim for ESA is reviewed from time to time, based on the Health Professional's advice about whether your condition will change.

You must **let the DWP know** if your health gets **better** or **worse** between assessments.

For more information go to www.citizensadvice.org.uk or contact our

Citizens Advice Helpline: 03444 111 444



Potteries Gold is a **Citizens Advice Staffordshire North & Stoke-on-Trent** project to help people in Stoke-on-Trent cope with changes to the benefit system

www.snsCab.org.uk/about-us/potteries-gold
Follow us on Facebook and Twitter: search for

Potteries Gold

© December 2020



PotteriesGold

Benefits If you are Not Fit for Work

Benefits and Health No 2



Employment and Support Allowance

You may be able to get Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if illness or disability stops you working or seriously limits the sort of work you can do.

It is **paid fortnightly**.

The basic rate is £74.70 per week, but you may get more following your **work capability assessment**.



You usually need a **medical certificate from your GP** to start your claim, although there are different rules if you are self-isolating due to Covid-19.

Confusingly, you use a Universal Credit helpline to claim. Call **0800 328 5644**, choose option 2, then option 6.

Types of ESA

If you've paid enough National Insurance (NI) contributions, you should get **New Style ESA**. You can get this even if you have a partner in work, savings or other income, although it may be **reduced by an occupational pension**.

New Style ESA does not include money for a partner or children.

Some people get **Income-related ESA** (a means-tested benefit), but you **cannot make a new claim** for this benefit as it is being **replaced by Universal Credit**.

Universal Credit

This is a **means-tested benefit** for **working age people**. If you **cannot get new style ESA**, or you want to claim benefits for a **partner** or **children**, or for **housing costs**, you usually need to claim Universal Credit.

You might be able to claim Universal Credit to **top up New Style ESA** or **Statutory Sick Pay** as UC for a **single person over 25** is currently worth £94.96 per week, but falling to £74.96 from October.

UC is **paid calendar monthly**. You usually have to **claim UC online**.

Any income you or your partner have can affect what you get. You cannot claim UC if you have **over £16,000** in savings or capital, like property or investments. If you **own your home**, it does not count as capital while you are living in it.



If you have **more than two children**, if some were born **after April 6th 2017**, you might not get Universal Credit for those children.

Your money might also be cut by the **Benefit Cap**.

The amount for your rent might be reduced by the **Local Housing Allowance** rules or the **Bedroom Tax**.

Ask us for **more information** and advice about this.

The Work Capability Assessment

If your health problem lasts **more than 13 weeks**, you may have a **Work Capability Assessment** to decide if you are fit for work. The DWP send you a form, asking how your health problems affect you. Even if you still have sick notes, you **must complete this form**.

The **ESA50** (or **UC50** for Universal Credit claims) asks about your physical and mental health. Answer the questions as fully as you can, using extra paper if you need it.

Explain how you cope most days. If you have **good days** when you can do more and **bad days** when it is harder to do things, **write about both**. If you need help to fill in this form, please contact us.

Going for a Medical Assessment

Normally, you will be sent for a medical, although these were replaced by telephone assessments during the Covid-19 crisis.

The assessment is done by a **Health Professional**. Make sure you are ready to answer questions about how you cope on an **average day**.

If you put good examples of the problems you face on a typical day on your ESA50 or UC50 form, you will be well-prepared to answer the questions asked in the medical.

Do not guess at answers.