

ESA: THE WORK CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT AND FORM ESA50

Durham
County Council



This factsheet looks at how your capability for work is assessed for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and gives tips on completing the ESA50 form. For general information about ESA see factsheet 22: Employment and Support Allowance.

At some point in the first 13 weeks of your ESA claim you will have your capability for work assessed. The test used to assess this is called the Work Capability Assessment (WCA).

The WCA is used to assess the way your condition affects your ability to perform a range of activities. The test is applied by looking at what you write on form ESA50 and what happens at the medical examination that you will usually have to attend after completing the form.

Unless you are terminally ill and therefore exempt from the WCA you will be sent form ESA50. This form must be completed. If you do not complete this form the DWP will automatically stop your ESA unless you show 'good cause' for failing to return the completed form.

The ESA50 asks about the effects that any physical disabilities or health problems have on common activities, and also about

the effects of any mental health problems and intellectual difficulties on those activities.

Under each of these activities is a list of problems of varying degrees of severity. These are called descriptors. The questionnaire asks you to select the descriptor in each activity that most closely matches how difficult you find it to perform the activity in question.

A points system is used by the DWP to determine whether you pass the test. Each descriptor is given a fixed number of points, ranging from 0 to 15 (the number of points allocated is not shown on the form). To pass the test you need to score 15 points in total. The points can come from any combination of activities.

Exact details of all the activities, descriptors and points used in the test are given in this factsheet from page 3 onwards.

Treated as having Limited Capability for Work

You can be 'treated as having limited capability for work' and pass the test without having to score the 15 points if:



Welfare Rights Team
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- you are terminally ill;
- you receive certain forms of chemotherapy or you are recovering from such treatment;
- you suffer from a specific disease or bodily or mental disablement and there would be a substantial risk to someone's mental or physical health if you weren't found to have limited capability for work;
- you have been requested or given notice, under specific legislation, to refrain from work because you are a carrier of, or have been in contact with, an infectious disease;
- you are pregnant and there would be a serious risk to your health or your child's if you did not refrain from work;
- you are pregnant or have recently given birth but you are not entitled to maternity allowance or statutory maternity pay, from 6 weeks before the baby is due to 2 weeks after the birth;
- you are receiving treatment as an in-patient in hospital or similar institution or are recovering from such treatment.

Advice on completing the form

Take into account the following when completing the form:

- Be honest about the extent of your disability/ill health. You should not exaggerate, but neither should you underestimate your problems.
- If your condition is variable this should be explained in your own words, with examples of how variations in your health affect your ability to perform the WCA's activities.

- The test takes into account your abilities when using any aid or appliance you would normally use, e.g. glasses, walking stick, unless the activity specifies otherwise.
- Answer questions in terms of your ability to do them in the course of a normal day. For example, if you can only bend down once and not repeatedly this does not mean you can do the activity. (This will not apply where the activity specifies the frequency of the activity in question.)
- If performing an activity is of risk to your health, enough to put a reasonable person off doing it, it may be that you cannot reasonably be expected to perform that activity.
- If a doctor has told you to avoid certain activities, make this clear.
- If a particular task gives you pain or discomfort this should be recorded, in detail, on the ESA50.
- Give any extra relevant information in the additional space provided.

Returning the ESA50

Return the ESA50 within 6 weeks of receiving it. If you don't return it within 6 weeks your ESA will be stopped unless you show good cause for not returning the form.

After you have returned the form you will usually be offered a medical with a health care professional who will give their opinion on how many points you should score. You must attend this medical unless you can show good cause for failing to do so.



Decision

If, after the WCA is applied, you are found to not have limited capability for work, you will be refused ESA. If you disagree with this decision you should make an appeal as soon as possible using form GL24, and seek representation as soon as you can. Form GL24 is available from your local DWP office.

You only have one month from the date on the decision

letter in which to appeal. This deadline can only be extended in exceptional circumstances. If you live in County Durham, Welfare Rights can advise you about an appeal and can represent you at the tribunal.

On the next few pages you will find details of the descriptors and how many points can be scored on each. The physical disability test is outlined on pages 3-8. The mental, intellectual and cognitive test is set out on pages 9-14.

THE LIMITED CAPABILITY FOR WORK ASSESSMENT—PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

#	Activity and Descriptors	Points
1	Walking with a walking stick or other aid if such aid is normally used	
a	Cannot walk at all	15
b	Cannot walk more than 50 metres on level ground without repeatedly stopping or severe discomfort	15
c	Cannot walk up or down two steps even with the support of a handrail	15
d	Cannot walk more than 100 metres on level ground without stopping or severe discomfort	9
e	Cannot walk more than 200 metres on level ground without stopping or severe discomfort	6
f	None of the above apply	0



2 Standing and sitting		
a	Cannot stand for more than 10 minutes, unassisted by another person, even if free to move around, before needing to sit down	15
b	Cannot sit in a chair with a high back and no arms for more than 10 minutes before needing to move from the chair because the degree of discomfort experienced makes it impossible to continue sitting	15
c	Cannot rise to standing from sitting in an upright chair without physical assistance from another person	15
d	Cannot move between one seated position and another seated position located next to one another without receiving physical assistance from another person	15
e	Cannot stand for more than 30 minutes, even if free to move around, before needing to sit down	6
f	Cannot sit in a chair with a high back and no arms for more than 30 minutes without needing to move from the chair because the degree of discomfort makes it impossible to continue sitting	6
g	None of the above apply	0

3 Bending or kneeling		
a	Cannot bend to touch knees and straighten up again	15
b	Cannot bend, kneel or squat, as if to pick up a light object, such as a piece of paper, situated 15cm from the floor on a low shelf, and to move it and straighten up again without the help of another person	9
c	Cannot bend, kneel or squat, as if to pick a light object off the floor and straighten up again without the help of another person	6
d	None of the above apply	0

4 Reaching		
a	Cannot raise either arm as if to put something in the top pocket of a coat or jacket	15
b	Cannot put either arm behind back as if to put on a coat or jacket	15
c	Cannot raise either arm to top of head as if put on a hat	9
d	Cannot raise either arm above head height as if to reach for something	6
e	None of the above apply	0



5 Picking up and moving or transferring by the use of the upper body and arms (excluding all other specified physical disabilities activities)		
a	Cannot pick up and move a 0.5 litre carton full of liquid with either hand	15
b	Cannot pick up and move a one litre carton full of liquid with either hand	9
c	Cannot pick up and move a light but bulky object such as an empty cardboard box, requiring the use of both hands together	6
d	None of the above apply	0

6 Manual dexterity		
a	Cannot turn a "star-headed" sink tap with either hand	15
b	Cannot pick up a £1 coin or equivalent with either hand	15
c	Cannot turn the pages of a book with either hand	15
d	Cannot physically use a pen or pencil	9
e	Cannot physically use a conventional keyboard or mouse	9
f	Cannot do up/undo small buttons, such as shirt or blouse buttons	9
g	Cannot turn a "star-headed" sink tap with one hand but can with the other	6
h	Cannot pick up a £1 coin or equivalent with one hand but can with the other	6
i	Cannot pour from an open 0.5 litre carton full of liquid	6
j	None of the above apply	0

7 Speech		
a	Cannot speak at all	15
b	Speech cannot be understood by strangers	15
c	Strangers have great difficulty understanding speech	9
d	Strangers have some difficulty understanding speech	6
e	None of the above apply	0



8 Hearing with a hearing aid or other aid if normally worn		
a	Cannot hear at all	15
b	Cannot hear well enough to be able to hear someone talking in a loud voice in a quiet room, sufficiently clearly to distinguish the words being spoken	15
c	Cannot hear someone talking in a normal voice in a quiet room, sufficiently clearly to distinguish the words being spoken	9
d	Cannot hear someone talking in a loud voice in a busy street, sufficiently clearly to distinguish the words being spoken	6
e	None of the above apply	0

9 Vision, including visual acuity and visual fields, in normal daylight or bright electric light, with glasses or other aid to vision if such aid is normally worn		
a	Cannot see at all	15
b	Cannot see well enough to read 16 point print at a distance of greater than 20cm	15
c	Has 50% or greater reduction of visual fields	15
d	Cannot see well enough to recognise a friend at a distance of at least 5 metres	9
e	Has 25% or more than less than 50% reduction of visual fields	6
f	Cannot see well enough to recognise a friend at a distance of at least 15 metres	6
g	None of the above apply	0



10 (a) Contenance other than enuresis (bed wetting) where the claimant does not have an artificial stoma or urinary collecting device

a (i)	Has no voluntary control over the evacuation of the bowel	15
a (ii)	Has no voluntary control over the voiding of the bladder	15
a (iii)	At least once a month loses control of bowels so that the claimant cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel	15
a (iv)	At least once a week, loses control of the bladder so that the claimant cannot control the full voiding of the bladder	15
a (v)	Occasionally loses control of bowels so that the claimant cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel	9
a (vi)	At least once a month loses control of bladder so that the claimant cannot control the full voiding of the bladder	6
a (vii)	Risks losing control of bowels of bladder so that the claimant cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel or the full voiding of the bladder if not able to reach a toilet quickly	6
a (viii)	None of the above apply	0

10 (b) Contenance where the claimant uses a urinary collecting device, worn for the majority of the time including an indwelling urethral or suprapubic catheter

b (i)	Is unable to affix, remove or empty the catheter bag or other collecting device without receiving physical assistance from another person	15
b (ii)	Is unable to affix, remove or empty the catheter bag or other collecting device without causing leakage of contents	15
b (iii)	Has no voluntary control over the evacuation of the bowel	15
b (iv)	At least once a month, loses control of bowels so that the claimant cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel	15
b (v)	Occasionally loses control of bowels, so that the claimant cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel	9
b (vi)	Risks losing control of bowels so that the claimant cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel if not able to reach a toilet quickly	6
a (vii)	None of the above apply	0



10 (c) Contenance other than enuresis (bed wetting) where the claimant has an artificial stoma		
c (i)	Is unable to affix, remove or empty stoma appliance without receiving physical assistance from another person	15
c (ii)	Is unable to affix remove or empty stoma appliance without causing leakage of contents	15
c (iii)	Where the claimant's artificial stoma relates solely to the evacuation of the bowel, at least once a week, loses control of bladder so that the claimant cannot control the full voiding of the bladder	15
c (iv)	Where the claimant's artificial stoma relates solely to the evacuation of the bowel, at least once a month, loses control of the bladder so that the claimant cannot control the full voiding of the bladder	9
c (v)	Where the claimant's artificial stoma relates solely to the evacuation of the bowel, risks losing control of the bladder so that the claimant cannot control the full voiding of the bladder if not able to reach a toilet quickly	6
c (vi)	None of the above apply	0

11 Remaining conscious during waking moments		
a	At least once a week, has an involuntary episode of lost or altered consciousness, resulting in significantly disrupted awareness of concentration	15
b	At least once a month, has an involuntary episode of lost or altered consciousness, resulting in significantly disrupted awareness or concentration	9
c	At least twice in the six months immediately preceding the assessment, has had an involuntary episode of lost or altered consciousness, resulting in significantly disrupted awareness or concentration	6
d	None of the above apply	0



THE LIMITED CAPABILITY FOR WORK ASSESSMENT—MENTAL, COGNITIVE, AND INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITIES

#	Activity and Descriptors	Points
12	Learning or comprehension in the completion of tasks	
a	Cannot learn or understand how to successfully complete a simple task, such as setting an alarm clock, at all	15
b	Needs to witness a demonstration, given more than once on the same occasion, of how to carry out a simple task before the claimant is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a further demonstration of how to complete it	15
c	Needs to witness a demonstration of how to carry out a simple task, before the claimant is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a verbal prompt from another person	9
d	Needs to witness a demonstration of how to carry out a moderately complex task, such as the steps involved in operating a washing machine to correctly clean clothes, before the claimant is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a verbal prompt from another person	9
e	Needs verbal instructions as to how to carry out a simple task before the claimant is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable, within a period of less than one week, to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a verbal prompt from another person	6
f	None of the above apply	0



13 Awareness of hazard		
a	Reduced awareness of the risks of everyday hazards (such as boiling water or sharp objects) would lead to daily instances of or to near-avoidance of: (i) injury to self or others; or (ii) significant damage to property or possessions, to the extent that overall day to day life cannot successfully be managed	15
b	Reduced awareness of the risks of everyday hazards would lead for the majority of the time to instances of or to the near-avoidance of: (i) injury to self or others; or (ii) significant damage to property or possessions, such that overall day to day life cannot successfully be managed without supervision from another person	9
c	Reduced awareness of the risks of everyday hazards has led or would lead to frequent instances of or to the near-avoidance of: (i) injury to self or others; or (ii) significant damage to property or possessions, but not to such an extent that overall day to day life cannot be managed when such incidents occur	6
d	None of the above apply	0

14 Memory or concentration		
a	On a daily basis, forgets or loses concentration to such an extent that overall day to day life cannot be successfully managed without receiving verbal prompting, given by someone else in the claimant's presence	15
b	For the majority of the time, forgets or loses concentration to such an extent that overall day to day life cannot be successfully managed without receiving verbal prompting, given by someone else in the claimant's presence	9
c	Frequently forgets or loses concentration to such an extent that overall day to day life can only be successfully managed with pre-planning, such as making a daily written list of all tasks forming part of daily life that are to be completed	6
d	None of the above apply	0



15 Execution of ideas		
a	Is unable to successfully complete any everyday task	15
b	Takes more than twice the length of time it would take a person without any form of mental disablement, to successfully complete an everyday task with which the claimant is familiar	15
c	Takes more than one and a half times but no more than twice the length of time it would take a person without any form of mental disablement to successfully complete an everyday task with which the claimant is familiar	9
d	Takes one and a half times the length of time it would take a person without any form of mental disablement to successfully complete an everyday task with which the claimant is familiar	6
e	None of the above apply	0

16 Initiating and sustaining personal action		
a	Cannot, due to a cognitive impairment or a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, initiate or sustain any personal action (which means planning, organisation, problem solving, prioritising or switching tasks)	15
b	Cannot, due to a cognitive impairment or a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, initiate or sustain personal action without requiring [daily] verbal prompting given by another person in the claimant's presence [for the majority of the time] <i>Note: amendments in brackets are taken from the draft version - the final version of 16b is identical to 16c below: this is clearly an error by the draftsman. We expect an amendment will return the edits placed in square brackets.</i>	15
c	Cannot, due to a cognitive impairment or a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, initiate or sustain personal action without requiring verbal prompting given by another person in the claimant's presence for the majority of the time	9
d	Cannot, due to a cognitive impairment or a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, initiate or sustain personal action without requiring frequent verbal prompting given by another person in the claimant's presence	6
e	None of the above apply	0



17 Coping with change		
a	Cannot cope with very minor, expected changes in routine, to the extent that overall day to day life cannot be managed	15
b	Cannot cope with expected changes in routine (such as a pre-arranged permanent change to the routine time scheduled for a lunch break), to the extent that overall day to day life is made significantly more difficult	9
c	Cannot cope with minor, unforeseen changes in routine (such as an unexpected change of the timing of an appointment on the day it is due to occur), to the extent that overall, day to day life is made significantly more difficult	6
d	None of the above apply	0

18 Getting about		
a	Cannot get to any specified place with which the claimant is, or would be, familiar	15
b	Is unable to get to a specified place with which the claimant is familiar, without being accompanied by another person on each occasion	15
c	For the majority of the time is unable to get to a specified place with which the claimant is familiar without being accompanied by another person	9
d	Is frequently unable to get to a specified place with which the claimant is familiar without being accompanied by another person	6
e	None of the above apply	0



19 Coping with social situations		
a	Normal activities, for example, visiting new places or engaging in social contact, are precluded because of overwhelming fear or anxiety	15
b	Normal activities, for example, visiting new places or engaging in social contact, are precluded for the majority of the time due to overwhelming fear or anxiety <i>Note: there is an error in the final version of 19b: no points are given for this descriptor. The draft version of the regulations gave 9 points; we assume an amendment will occur to correct this.</i>	[9] 0
c	Normal activities, for example, visiting new places or engaging in social contact, are frequently precluded, due to overwhelming fear or anxiety	6
d	None of the above apply	0

20 Propriety of behaviour with other people		
a	Has unpredictable outbursts of aggressive, disinhibited, or bizarre behaviour, being either: (i) sufficient to cause disruption to others on a daily basis; or (ii) of such severity that although occurring less frequently than on a daily basis, no reasonable person would be expected to tolerate them	15
b	Has a completely disproportionate reaction to minor events or criticism to the extent that the claimant has an extreme violent outburst leading to threatening behaviour or actual physical violence	15
c	Has unpredictable outbursts of aggressive, disinhibited or bizarre behaviour, sufficient in severity or frequency to cause disruption for the majority of the time	9
d	Has a strongly disproportionate reaction to minor events or to criticism, to the extent that the claimant cannot manage overall day to day life when such events or criticism occur	9
e	Has unpredictable outbursts of aggressive, disinhibited or bizarre behaviour, sufficient to cause frequent disruption	6
f	Frequently demonstrates a moderately disproportionate reaction to minor events or to criticism but not to such an extent that the claimant cannot manage overall day to day life when such events or criticism occur	6
g	None of the above apply	0



21 Dealing with other people		
a	Is unaware of impact of own behaviour to the extent that: (i) has difficulty relating to others even for brief periods, such as a few hours; or (ii) causes distress to others on a daily basis	15
b	The claimant misinterprets verbal or non-verbal communication to the extent of causing himself or herself significant distress on a daily basis	15
c	Is unaware of impact of own behaviour to the extent that: (i) has difficulty relating to others for longer periods, such as a day or two; or (ii) causes distress to others for the majority of the time	9
d	The claimant misinterprets verbal or non-verbal communication to the extent of causing himself or herself significant distress for the majority of the time	9
e	Is unaware of impact of own behaviour to the extent that: (i) has difficulty relating to others for prolonged periods, such as a week; or (ii) frequently causes distress to others	6
f	The claimant misinterprets verbal or non-verbal communication to the extent of causing himself or herself significant distress on a frequent basis	6
g	None of the above apply	0

After your capability for work is assessed

If you fail to score 15 points or otherwise be treated as having limited capability for work your ESA will be stopped. You can appeal this decision and your basic rate ESA will continue to be paid until the appeal is decided by a tribunal (see page 2 for further advice or ask for a copy of factsheet 4: Appealing a Decision).

If you have passed the test and scored 15 points, you will continue to be paid ESA. However, there is a further test that is applied to decide which group of claimants you will be placed in: the Support Group or the Work-Related Activity Group. This test is called the Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity test.

The next few pages deal with this further test.



The Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity test

This test is important because it decides which of two groups of ESA claimants you will be placed in: the Work-Related Activity Group or the Support Group. The two groups receive different amounts of benefit and have different responsibilities when it comes to performing work-related activity.

Work-Related Activity Group

In the Work-Related Activity Group you experience two main differences from someone in the Support Group:

- You receive an extra £24 a week on top of the basic (assessment group) rate of ESA: this is called the work-related activity component.
- You have to engage in work-related activity, which takes the form of things like work-focused interviews designed to improve your capability for work. **If you fail to engage in this work-related activity, you will have a sanction made against you** which will cause you to lose some or all of your work-related activity component (although the basic assessment group rate of ESA will still be paid).

The vast majority of claimants will be placed into the Work-Related Activity Group.

For more detail on work-related activity and sanctions, see factsheet 24: *ESA and Work-Related Activity*.

Support Group

In the Support Group you experience two main differences from someone in the Work-Related Activity Group:

- You receive an extra £29 a week on top of the basic (assessment group) rate of ESA: this is called the support component.
- You do not have to engage in work-related activity, or attend things like work-focused interviews. You can engage in such activity voluntarily, but there are no sanctions if you choose not to.

Only a small percentage of claimants will be placed in the Support Group.

How is it decided which group you are placed in?

As well as assessing if you have limited capability for work, the WCA also contains the limited capability for work-related activity test. This simply means if one of the descriptors on the following pages applies to you, you will be placed in the Support Group. If none of the descriptors applies to you, you will be placed in the Work-Related Activity Group.

You have a right of appeal against the decision to place you into the Work-Related Activity Group. You must appeal within one month of the decision being made. Contact Welfare Rights for more advice about how to appeal.



THE LIMITED CAPABILITY FOR WORK-RELATED ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT

NB If any of the following applies to you, you will be placed in the Support Group. If none applies, you will be placed in the Work-Related Activity Group.

Activity and Descriptors

1 Walking or moving on level ground

Cannot -
a) walk (with a walking stick or other aid, if such aid is normally used);
b) move (with the aid of crutches if crutches are normally used); or
c) manually propel the claimant's wheel chair;
more than 30 metres without repeatedly stopping, experiencing breathlessness or severe discomfort

2 Rising from sitting and transferring from one seated position to another

Cannot complete both of the following:
a) rise to standing from sitting in an upright chair without receiving physical assistance from someone else; and
b) move between one seated position and another seated position located next to one another without receiving physical assistance from someone else

3 Picking up and moving or transferring by the use of the upper body and arms (excluding standing, sitting, bending or kneeling and all other activities specified in this Schedule)

Cannot pick up and move 0.5 litre carton full of liquid with either hand

4 Reaching

Cannot raise either arm as if to put something in the top pocket of a coat or jacket



5 Manual dexterity

- Cannot -
- a) turn a "star headed" sink tap with either hand; or
 - b) pick up a £1 coin or equivalent with either hand

6a Contenance other than enuresis (bed wetting) where the claimant does not have an artificial stoma or urinary collecting device

a	Has no voluntary control over the evacuation of the bowel
b	Has no voluntary control over the voiding of the bladder
c	At least once a week, loses control of bowels so that the claimant cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel
d	At least one a week, loses control of the bladder so that the claimant cannot control the full voiding of the bladder
e	At least once a week, fails to control full evacuation of the bowel, owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour
f	At least once a week, fails to control full voiding of the bladder, owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour

6b Contenance where the claimant uses a urinary collecting device, worn for the majority of the time including an indwelling urethral or suprapubic catheter

a	Is unable to affix, remove or empty the catheter bag or other collecting device without receiving physical assistance from another person
b	Is unable to affix, remove or empty the catheter bag or other collecting device without causing leakage of contents
c	Has no voluntary control over the evacuation of the bowel
d	At least once a week loses control of the bowels so that the claimant cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel; or
e	At least once a week, fails to control full evacuation of the bowel, owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour



6c Contenance other than enuresis (bed wetting) where the claimant has an artificial stoma appliance	
a	Is unable to affix, remove or empty stoma appliance without receiving physical assistance from another person
b	Is unable to affix, remove or empty stoma without causing leakage of contents
c	Where the claimant's artificial stoma relates solely to the evacuation of the bowel, has no voluntary control over the voiding of the bladder
d	Where the claimant's artificial stoma relates solely to the evacuation of the bowel, at least once a week, loses control of the bladder so that the claimant cannot control the full voiding of the bladder
e	Where the claimant's artificial stoma relates solely to the evacuation of the bowel, at least once a week, fails to control the full voiding of the bladder, owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour

7 Maintaining personal hygiene	
a	Cannot clean own torso (excluding own back) without receiving physical assistance from someone else
b	Cannot clean own torso (excluding back) without repeatedly stopping, experiencing breathlessness or severe discomfort
c	Cannot clean own torso (excluding back) without receiving regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant's presence
d	Owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, fails to clean own torso (excluding own back) without receiving - i) physical assistance from someone else; or ii) regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant's presence



8a Eating and drinking - conveying food or drink to the mouth	
a	Cannot convey food or drink to the claimant's own mouth without receiving physical assistance from someone else
b	Cannot convey food or drink to the claimant's own mouth without repeatedly stopping, experiencing breathlessness or severe discomfort
c	Cannot convey food or drink to the claimant's own mouth without receiving regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant's physical presence; or
d	Owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, fails to convey food or drink to the claimant's own mouth without receiving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) physical assistance from someone else; or ii) regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant's presence

8b Eating and drinking - chewing or swallowing food or drink	
a	Cannot chew or swallow food or drink
b	Cannot chew or swallow food or drink without repeatedly stopping, experiencing breathlessness or severe discomfort
c	Cannot chew or swallow food or drink without repeatedly receiving regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant's presence
d	Owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, fails to - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) chew or swallow food or drink; or ii) chew or swallow food or drink without regular prompting given by someone else in the claimant's presence

9 Learning or comprehension in the completion of tasks	
a	Cannot learn or understand how to successfully complete a simple task, such as the preparation of a hot drink, at all
b	Needs to witness a demonstration, given more than once on the same occasion of how to carry out a simple task before the claimant is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a further demonstration of how to complete it; or
c	Fails to do any of the matters referred to in (a) or (b) owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour



10 Personal action	
a	Cannot initiate or sustain any personal action (which means planning, organisation, problem solving, prioritising or switching tasks)
b	Cannot initiate or sustain personal action without requiring daily verbal prompting given by someone else in the claimant's presence; or
c	Fails to initiate or sustain basic personal action without requiring daily verbal prompting given by someone else in the claimant's presence, owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour

11 Communication	
a	None of the following forms of communication can be achieved by the claimant: i) speaking (to a standard that may be understood by strangers) ii) writing (to a standard that may be understood by strangers) iii) typing (to a standard that may be understood by strangers) iv) sign language to a standard equivalent to Level 3 British Sign Language
b	None of the forms of communication referred to in (a) are achieved by the claimant, owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour
c	Misinterprets verbal or non-verbal communication to the extent of causing distress to himself or herself on a daily basis
d	Effectively cannot make himself or herself understood to others because of the claimant's dissociation from reality owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour



Even if you do not satisfy one of the descriptors above, you can be treated as satisfying the test and automatically be placed in the Support Group if:

- you are terminally ill; or
- you are receiving intravenous, intraperitoneal or intrathecal chemotherapy or are recovering from the treatment; or
- you have a specific disease or bodily or mental disablement and there would be a substantial risk to the mental or physical health of any person if you were placed in the Work-Related Activity Group; or
- you are a pregnant woman, and there would be a substantial risk to your or your baby's health if you undertook work-related activity.

What happens now?

After the WCA is completed, a decision maker will send you a written decision. This should tell you:

- Whether you have a limited capability for work and are entitled to ESA or not. You have a right of appeal against this decision.
- If you are entitled to ESA, which group you will be placed

in. You also have a right of appeal against this decision.

If you are placed in the Support Group, you should receive ESA without any requirement to engage in work-related activity. However, you can still do some work voluntarily, including paid work in certain circumstances, without this affecting your entitlement to ESA. See our factsheet 22: *Employment and Support Allowance* for more details.

If you are placed in the Work-Related Activity Group, you will have to undertake another assessment—the Health-Focused Work-Related Assessment—as part of your overall assessment. You will also need to attend a number of Work-Focused Interviews at your JobCentre Plus office as an ongoing condition of receiving your work-related Activity component.

If you are in the Work-Related Activity Group and want to find out more about these work-related assessments and interviews, or are sanctioned and want to know what you can do about it, ask for a copy of our factsheet 24: *ESA and Work-Related Activity*.

Like people in the Support Group, if you are in the Work-Related Activity Group you can also do voluntary work, or even paid work in certain circumstances, without this affecting your entitlement to ESA. See factsheet 22 for more details. ■



Need more advice? CONTACT WELFARE RIGHTS:

By telephone:
Advice Line
0191 370 8787

By email:
welfare.rights@durham.gov.uk

By text message:
csd wr [your message] to 60003

In writing:
Welfare Rights • Social Inclusion Service • Adults, Wellbeing and Health
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