

ESA after your medical.

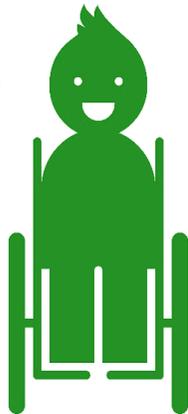
Once your 'Capability for Work' form and 'Work Capability' medical Assessment report are with the DWP, they will decide whether to award ESA or not.

If you are assessed **fit for work**, your ESA claim is ended. If you disagree with this decision, you have **one calendar month** to ask for it to be **reconsidered**. See our leaflet on what to do if you are found fit for work.

If you are not judged fit for work, the DWP put you into one of two 'groups'.

The Work-Related Activity Group ('WRAG')

This is supposed to be for people who, with help, could return to work in the near future. If you are put in the 'WRAG' you will 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**.



If you are already in the WRAG you may be getting a **work-related activity component** on top of your basic ESA rate.

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

The Support Group

If the DWP accepts that you are not likely to be well enough to return to work for a long time or even to cope with work-related activity, you are put in the **Support Group**. You qualify for a **support component** on top of your ESA. If you get income-based ESA, you also get an **enhanced disability premium**.

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. How often this happens depends on how likely it is that your condition will change.

You are sent another ESA50 form and may have to go for another medical. You have the same appeal rights if your ESA is stopped or reduced.

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
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Guide to...

Employment and Support Allowance



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. You should also claim ESA if your **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)** from work is running out.

If you get **Incapacity Benefit**, **Income Support** as sick or **Severe Disablement Allowance**, you may have to claim ESA in future. Because ESA is assessed differently to these benefits, there is no guarantee you will qualify for it. Get further advice if you are in this situation.



Types of ESA

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

If you cannot get contribution-based ESA, you may be entitled to **income-based ESA**. This is a **means-tested benefit**. Other income you or your partner have will reduce what you get and you cannot claim if you have savings or capital of over £16,000.

Making a claim

Most claims start with a phone call. To make a new claim call **0800 055 6688** or you can claim using a paper **ESA1** form.

You will need to provide a **Medical Certificate** from your GP or other proof that you are not fit for work. Usually, this will be enough to start your claim and pay you the basic **assessment rate** of ESA.

The Work Capability Assessment

If you have a longer-term health problem, the DWP will do a **Work Capability Assessment** to decide if you are fit for work. This starts by sending you a form known as an **ESA50**. This asks you to fill in a self-assessment of how your health problems affect you. Even if you still have sick notes, **you must complete this form** or your ESA claim will end.

The ESA50 is quite a long form. It 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 or 'bad' days when it is harder to do things, write about these too. If you need help to fill in this form or might find it useful to come to one of our **workshops** to learn more, please contact us.

Going for a Medical Assessment

As well as completing an ESA50 form, you may have to attend a medical assessment. The medicals are carried out by a firm working for the DWP. In Stoke, these happen at an office on Festival Park.

You are allowed to take someone with you, such as a carer, support worker or adviser. You are also allowed to ask for the medical to be recorded, although you must do this before your appointment.

Make sure you are ready to answer questions about how you cope on an **average day** with your physical and mental health. If you gave examples on your claim form of problems you face on a typical day, you will be well-prepared to answer their questions. Try not to guess at answers.

What Happens Next?

The health professional who does your medical does not decide if you can stay on ESA or what rate you will get in future. A decision-maker at the DWP uses your ESA50 form and the report from your medical assessment to decide if you are fit for work. They use a points system for this. Usually you need to score at least 15 points to get ESA.

