



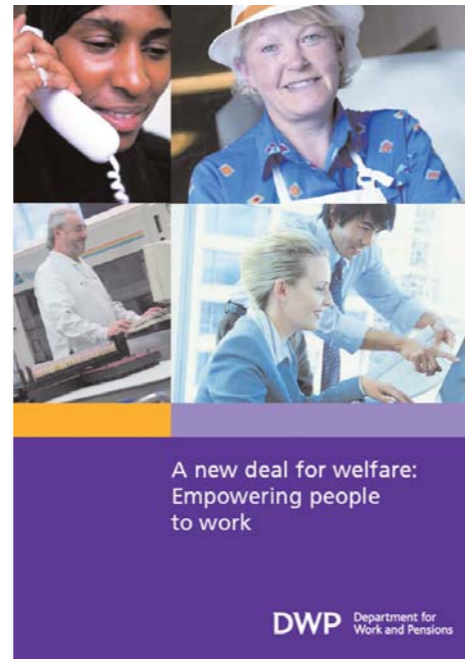
Helping people to work

Easy read

This booklet tells you about some ideas the Government has to make it easier for people on **benefits** to find new work, or to go back to their old work.

We want to know what you think about our ideas.

This booklet is a short version of a longer book called **A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work**. The longer book is a **Green Paper**. A **Green Paper** tells people what the Government wants to do and asks people what they think about it.



We would like to hear what you think about our ideas. We tell you how to do this on page 31 of this booklet.

You can find out more about the **Green Paper** on our website: www.dwp.gov.uk/aboutus/welfarereform



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When we say '**we**' in this booklet, we mean the Government.

There is a list of some words and names in this booklet and what they mean on page 32. These words are in **purple** letters.

What is this booklet about?

The Government thinks that people should be able to work if they want to. We also believe that people should go to work if they can.



We know not everyone can work. We know that some people cannot work because they are ill, or disabled, or a single parent with young children.



But we also know that some people who are on **benefits** who are ill or disabled or a single parent would like to work if they could get the right job.

We know that some people worry that they may lose their **benefits** if they try to work or break the rules by mistake.

We also know that a few of the people who claim **benefits** could work but pretend that they cannot. This is not fair to people who really are ill or disabled. It is also not fair to people who have to pay tax to support people on **benefits**.



The Government spends a lot of money on **benefits** for people who are out of work. We think it would be a good idea if we could spend some of this money to help people find the right job instead.

At the moment, there are lots of different kinds of **benefits**. And there are lots of rules to remember. So the **benefits system** can be hard to understand for:

- people who claim **benefits**,
- people who decide who should get **benefits**,
- people who say how much **benefit** you should get.



This booklet tells you about how we plan to:

- Help people to go to work if they can.
- Make the **benefits system** easier for everyone to understand.
- Make sure that the **benefits system** is fair to everyone.



What do we want to do?

The Government is already working hard to help people to go to work if they can, and if they want to.

Today, there are a lot less people without jobs than a few years ago.

But there are still 5.5 million people of working age who claim **benefits**.



We want to:

- Help people on **incapacity benefits** to find work.
- Have 1 million less people on **incapacity benefits**.
- Help 300,000 single parents to find jobs.
- Help 1 million people over 50 years old to find jobs.

This will take a long time. But we have already started to plan the best ways to do these things.



Here are some ways we want to help people to find jobs.

- Talk to people to help them plan how to get a job.
- Help people learn new **skills** that they can use when they have a job.
- Help people to try working for a while without losing **benefits**.
- Help doctors and other people in the health service to help people on **benefits** to go back to work.
- Help **employers** to make sure the people who work for them can keep their jobs if they get ill or disabled.
- Make sure everyone who really needs **benefits** will get them.
- Make it easier for everyone to understand the **benefits system**.



Before we decide how we can do these things, we want to know what you think about our ideas. We will tell you how you can tell us what you think on page 31 of this booklet.

Why is it good to work?

Working is good for you and good for your family.

Working can make you more independent and make you feel better about yourself.

When you work, you earn money. When you earn money you do not need as much help from the Government.



Working is also good for the place where you live and for the country. This is because when you work, you need no **benefits** or less **benefits**.

You also spend more money in your area and you may pay tax.

Your taxes help to pay for services like health and education. These services help everyone. Your taxes also help to pay for **benefits** that help people who really need them.

Helping ill or disabled people

Why do we want to change things?

The Government helps lots of people who are ill or disabled by giving them money called **benefits**.

There are over 2.5 million people who get **Incapacity Benefit** or **Income Support** when they are ill or disabled. In this booklet we talk about **incapacity benefits**, which means both of these **benefits**.



We know a lot of people who get **incapacity benefits** would like to go to work if they could. But it is hard for some people to find work without some help. So many people stay on **incapacity benefits** until they are old enough to get a **pension**.

At the moment, the longer someone gets **incapacity benefits** the more money they get. We think this is wrong because it makes it too easy for people not to go to work.

We know that the longer people stay on **benefits**, the harder it is for them to go back to work.



We think that **incapacity** is a bad name because **incapacity** means that someone cannot do anything. We think that everyone can do some things and that we should stop using this word.

What are the problems?

The problems we have at the moment are:

- It is too easy for some people to get **incapacity benefits**.
- Some people start to get **benefits** before they have a medical check.
- The longer people get **benefits**, the harder it is for them to start work.
- Some people worry that if they try to work they might stop getting **benefits**. So they do not try to find work.

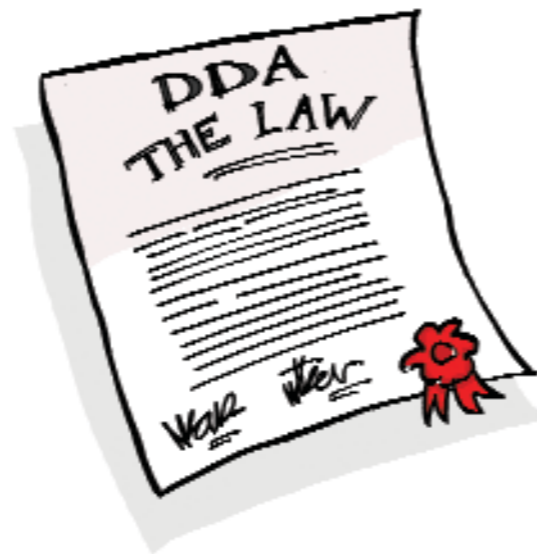


What are we doing already?

The Government wants to make things better for ill and disabled people in lots of ways.

Here are some of the things we have done already:

- **Disability Discrimination Act**
We have made a new law called the **Disability Discrimination Act**. This gives disabled people more rights.



- **Disability Rights Commission**
We have given disabled people a special office called the **Disability Rights Commission** to help look after disabled people's rights.



- **New Deal for Disabled People**
New Deal for Disabled People gives disabled people extra help to find work.



- **Pathways to Work**
Pathways to Work is an idea that we have been testing in a few areas. It helps people with health problems or disabilities to find a job and to get ready for work. It also gives them some money while they do this.

Pathways to Work also works with **employers** and health services so that everyone is working together to help solve the problems ill and disabled people have.

What do we want to do?

We want to:

- Help people on **incapacity benefits** to go to work.
- Have 1 million less people on **incapacity benefits**.
- Help people who become ill or disabled to keep their jobs.
- Help everyone to understand that ill or disabled people can do a job as well as other people.



- Change the name **incapacity benefits** to **Employment and Support Allowance**. This new name tells people that we will help them to work and support them if they need it.
- Make sure people who cannot work get the **benefits** they need.
- Make the **benefits system** fairer for everyone.



First, we plan to change the **benefits system** for people who have not tried to claim **benefits** before.

At first, we will **not** change the system for people who already get **benefits**. But we will offer more help to people already on **benefits**, if they want it.



How can we make things better for ill or disabled people?

The most important thing is to help everyone to stay healthy. But if people do become ill or disabled, we want to help them stay at work. For people who are out of work and on **benefits**, we want to make it easier for them to come off **benefits**.



We have lots of ideas about how to make things better for ill and disabled people.

We will:

- Make sure people know how important it is to stay healthy and how to keep their jobs.
- Talk to doctors and health workers, **employers**, people at work and others. We will help them understand how important it is for everyone to be able to work if they want to.
- Make sure people can get support at work when they need it.
- Give special help to people with mental health problems.
- Give support to people who go back to work after a long time.



- Try to stop other people treating ill or disabled people in a bad way at work.
- Work with **trade unions** and the **Health and Safety Executive** to make sure people are safe at work.

Mental health

Almost half the people who get **incapacity benefits** have a mental health problem.

We are teaching people how to give special help to people with mental health problems. We are also looking at other things we could do for people with mental health problems.



Workplace Health Connect

We will use something called **Workplace Health Connect** to tell **employers** and people who work in smaller companies about how they can make work better for ill and disabled people.

Working with doctors

Doctors can do a lot to help ill and disabled people to stay in work, or to support them to go back to work.



To help doctors do a better job we will:

- Tell doctors why good health at work is so important.
- Find out which doctors already know good ways of helping ill and disabled people to stay in work, or to go back to work.
- Tell other doctors and health workers about these good ways.
- Make the **Sick Certificate** easier to fill in.
- Start a telephone line to give advice to doctors.



Statutory Sick Pay

Statutory Sick Pay is money that an **employer** must pay people who work for them when they are sick and off work.

Employers have told us that the rules about **Statutory Sick Pay** are very hard to understand.

We want to make the rules easier to understand.



Personal Capability Assessment (PCA)

Personal Capability Assessment is the way we decide if someone should get **incapacity benefits**. At the moment, this **assessment** looks at what people cannot do. We want to change this so that it looks at what people can do.

We want the **PCA** to find out which people could work. We will then help them to find a job doing the sort of work they could do.

But we want to be sure that we always give **benefits** to people who really do need them. So we will work with people who know about health and disability to make sure that the **assessments** are fair.

Everyone will have to have a **PCA** before they can claim any extra **benefits**.

We also want to find a new name for **Personal Capability Assessment**.

Employment and Support Allowance

We think that a lot of people who get **benefits** want to work.

We plan to have a new **benefit** called **Employment and Support Allowance**.



This new **benefit** will:

- Give people money while they try to find work.
- Give extra money to people who try to do things to help them go back to work.
- Give more money to people who are very ill or disabled who cannot work.
- Let people do some **part-time** work without losing **benefits**.

- Let people do **voluntary work** to help them learn new **skills**.
- Help younger people get back to work as soon as they can.
- Be easier to understand than the old **benefits**.
- Replace **Incapacity Benefit** and **Income Support** for ill or disabled people.



This new **benefit** will not:

- Use the word **incapacity**.
- Keep going up the longer a person claims it.



How does the Employment and Support Allowance work?

When a person asks us for **Employment and Support Allowance** we will do an **assessment**. This means we will talk to the person and to people like health workers about what the person can do and why they think they need the **allowance**.



We will then give the person an **interview** when we will talk about what sort of work they could do if they had the right help. We will also talk about extra help they could get to help get ready to work.

At first, we will give the person the same money as we give for the basic rate of **Jobseeker's Allowance**. We will then work out very carefully how much **allowance** they should get. This, with the **PCA**, will take about 3 months.



If we agree that the person should get **Employment and Support Allowance**, we will start paying them more money. But they will have to make a plan to help them get a job. We will help them to do this.

If we think that the person is too ill or too disabled to work, we will not ask them to make a plan. But they can do this if they want to.



We will give everyone on **Employment and Support Allowance** lots of help and advice when they are getting the **allowance**.

Because health and disability can change we will always be ready to change the **Employment and Support Allowance** if we need to.

Our promise

We promise that the new **benefits system** will be fair. We will make sure that everyone gets the money they need.

We also promise that if anyone is unhappy with something that we decide, they can **appeal**. That means they can ask us to think again and maybe change our mind.



Other disability benefits

There are some **benefits** like the **Disability Living Allowance** that will not change. Some other **benefits** will be replaced by the new **Employment and Support Allowance**.

Please remember

Our plans are for people who want to start to claim **benefits**. We do not want to change things yet for people who are already on **benefits**.

Why do we want to change things?

There are a lot of single parents who are out of work and who get **Income Support**. Some single parents also get other **benefits** like **Jobseeker's Allowance** and **Incapacity Benefit**.



We want to help single parents to find work. If they start to earn money it will make life better for them and better for their children.

What are the problems?

Single parents can have problems:

- Most single parents who do not work are poor. We know that many of them will stay poor if nothing is done about it.
- They worry about what would happen to their children if they went out to work.
- If they are out of work for a long time, they worry that they will not be able to do a job well any more.



The Government has problems too:

- A lot of single parents have got **skills** that they are not using. This is a waste of **skills**.
- It costs the Government a lot of money to pay **benefits** to people who could do a job and earn money.



What are we doing already?

We have been helping single parents to work in lots of different ways. Here are some of them:

■ More childcare

We are making sure that there is more childcare for young children and children of school age. This has made it easier for parents to find good childcare. And this means that some single parents have been able to start work, either full-time or **part-time**.



- **National Minimum Wage**
The **National Minimum Wage** means that people can get a fair **wage** to do a job, even if it is **part-time** or **unskilled work**. This can help single parents.



- **Working Tax Credit**
Working Tax Credit is the money we give to people who do not earn much. It can help pay for childcare.

- **New Deal for Lone Parents**
New Deal for Lone Parents helps single parents move off **benefits** and get ready to do a job.

- **Shorter hours**
We have also made it easier for people to work shorter hours. This helps people with children.



What do we want to do?

We want to do a lot of things to help. We want to:

- Show single parents that working could make their lives and their children's lives better.
- Help single parents go back to work.
- Talk to single parents at least every 6 months about how we could help them find work.



How can we make things better for single parents?

We have a lot of ideas about how to make things better for single parents. Here are some of them:

- Give single parents more help from **Jobcentre Plus**.
- Give single parents with children over 11 years old some extra money if they start to do things that will help them get ready to go back to work.



Why do we want to change things?

People are living longer. By the year 2024, about half of the adults in the UK will be over 50 years old. Less people over 50 have jobs than people under 50. This means that there will not be enough people working and paying taxes to pay the **benefits** and **State Pensions** for all these older people.



What are the problems?

A lot of people over 50 do want to carry on working. And older people have important **skills** that **employers** need.

But a lot of people between 50 and the **State Pension age** do not work. This is because some people:

- choose to **retire** early,
- become ill or disabled as they get older,
- have to care for someone at home,
- lose their job and find it hard to find another job,
- do not realise how long they are going to live and that they need to save money for their **retirement**,



- are treated unfairly because of their age.

Also, some **employers** think that it is better to have young people to work for them.



What are we doing already?

The number of people over 50 and in work is going up. Today, about 1 million people over the **State Pension age** still work. A lot of these people work **part-time** or are **self-employed**.



The Government wants to make things better for older workers. Here are a few of the things we have done already:

■ **New Deal for 50 plus**

We have helped 150,000 people over 50 to find jobs in the last 5 years.

■ **Age Positive**

We have started to change the way people think about older people. We have given **employers** information to help them to see that older people are good for their businesses.

■ **Age law**

We will make a law this year that says people do not have to **retire** before 65 if they do not want to. Employers will not be allowed to treat people under 65 differently because of their age.

■ Pension changes

Today, **State Pension age** is 65 for men and 60 for women.

If you start to claim your **State Pension** later, you will get more money later. You can now get a lump sum if you wait for a year or more before you claim your **State Pension**.

From April 2006, people who work after **State Pension age** will be able to get some of their work **pension** if they keep working for the same **employer**.

From 2010, women will get their **State Pension** at the same age as men.

What do we want to do?

We want to help another 1 million older people into work, and help people to work longer if they want to. We think this may take a long time – probably more than 15 years.

The most important way we can do this is to change how people think about older people.

We want everyone to understand that older workers:

- are good at their jobs,
- are important to their **employers**,
- have a wide range of **skills** and experience,



- can ask their **employer** for work after age 65,
- can work different hours,
- are good for the workplace.

We want to give older people the chance to return to work and the choice to stay in work for longer. This will make it easier for the Government to pay **benefits** and **State Pensions** to the people who really cannot work.

How can we make things better for older workers?

To help older people stay at work or go back to work, we will:

- Give them the same help that we give people between 25 and 50 years old through **New Deal 25 plus**.
- Help them and their partner to find work with help from **Jobcentre Plus**.
- Talk to them more about working, training and planning to **retire**.
- Make it easier for older people to work the hours they want.
- Help **employers** understand why they should offer **part-time** work to older people.



Housing Benefit

- Make a law that says **employers** must not **discriminate** against older workers.
- Make a law that says people do not have to **retire** before 65 if they do not want to.



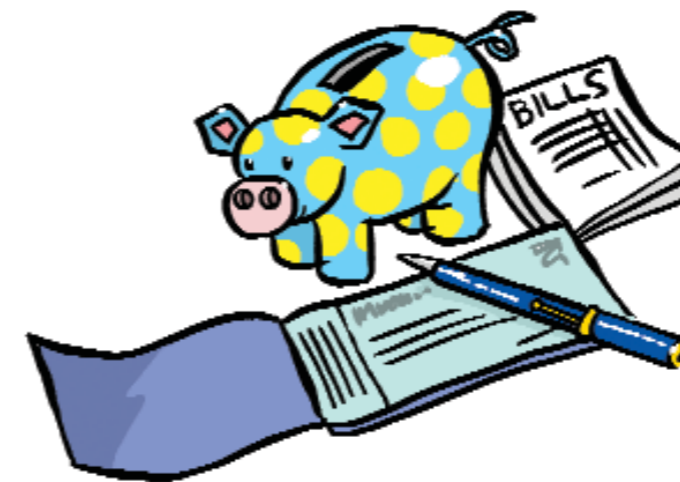
We will also make it more difficult for people to **retire** early. We will change the law so that:

- women will get their **State Pension** at 65 (at the moment it is 60), and
- no one will be able to take a **non-state pension** before they are 55 (at the moment it is 50).



Why do we want to change things?

Some people get a **benefit** called **Housing Benefit**. **Housing Benefit** helps people to pay their **rent**. But it can be hard for people to understand how much **benefit** they should get.



Looking after money is an important **skill** that can help a person to find and to keep a job. But because **Housing Benefit** is often paid to the **landlord**, it does not help the **tenant** to learn how to look after their own money.

What are the problems?

There are a lot of problems with **Housing Benefit**:

- It is very hard to understand.
- Sometimes it takes a long time for **local authorities** to pay **Housing Benefit** to the people who need it.



What are we doing already?

To make things better for people who claim **Housing Benefit**, we have:

- made it easier for everyone to understand,
- made it easier to claim,
- given **local authorities** help to pay **Housing Benefit** more quickly,
- started to test a new sort of **Housing Benefit**.

Local Housing Allowance

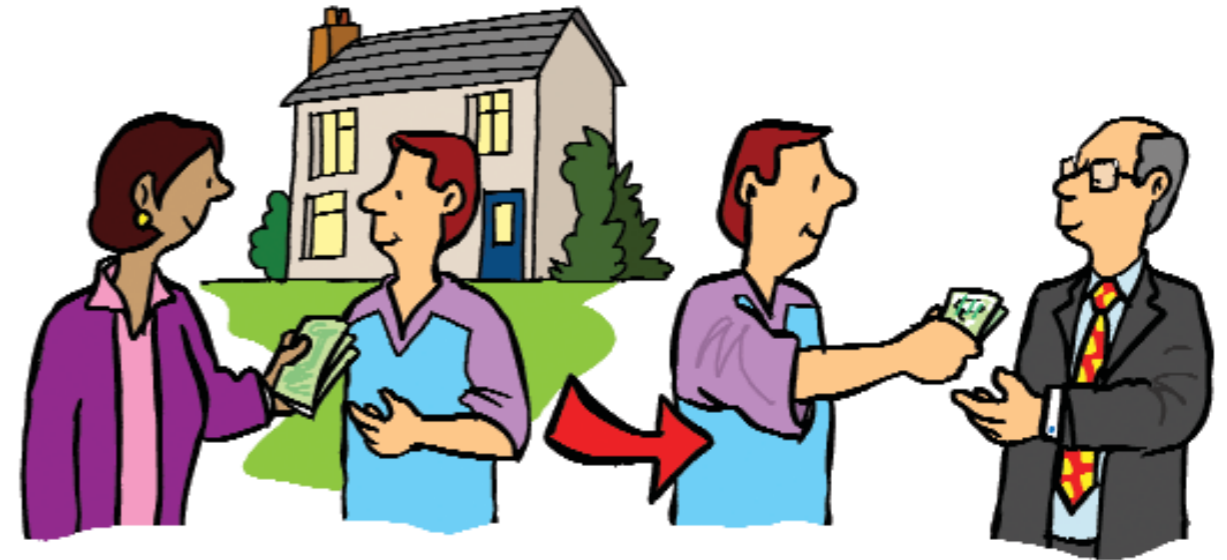
We are testing a new sort of **Housing Benefit** in some areas, called **Local Housing Allowance**. At the moment this is only for people with a **private landlord**. We will use what we learn from this test to help people with **private landlords** in other areas.

Local Housing Allowance will:

- be fairer,
- give **tenants** more choice,
- be easy to understand,
- help people to pay their own **rent**,
- help people to learn to look after their own money.



We will usually pay the **benefit** to the **tenant** – not to the **landlord**.



How much **Local Housing Allowance** people get will depend on where the house is and who lives there.

The **Local Housing Allowance** test has told us that:

- Most people in the test have used the money well.
- The **allowance** is quicker for **local authorities** to pay.
- Most landlords say the way we pay the new **allowance** has not given them any problems.
- There are not any more homeless people because of the new way we pay the **allowance**.



But some things in the test are not working so well.

What do we want to do?

We still need to do more work on **Local Housing Allowance** to make sure it is fair and that it works well.



We are waiting to see how the **Local Housing Allowance** test is going in different parts of the country. We will tell people more about the results of the test later in 2006.

We have started to make things better for **tenants** with **private landlords** but we want to do a lot more. We also want to make things better for **tenants** of councils and **housing associations**. We would like to know how you think we can do this.



We have told you about our ideas for making it easier for people to find work.

You can find out more about our ideas on our website:

www.dwp.gov.uk/aboutus/welfarereform

Now we would like you to tell us what you think of our ideas. Please tell us if the ideas you send us are yours, or if they are from lots of people or from an organisation.

Please tell us your ideas by 21st April 2006.

We may want to tell other people about what you tell us. So please do not tell us anything you would not want anyone else to know about.

If you do not want us to tell anyone about what you tell us, please tell us why.

You can:



Write to us at:

The Welfare Reform Team
The Adelphi
1-11 John Adam Street
London WC2N 6HT



Telephone:

020 7712 2521

(Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)



email:

welfarereform@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

You can get more copies of this booklet from us at the same address, telephone number and email address.

Useful words

Here is a list that tells you what some of the words in this booklet mean. The words in this list are in **purple** in the booklet.

Age Positive	A Government plan that helps employers understand that older workers are good for business.
allowance	Money paid to you for a special purpose.
appeal	If you are not happy with what has been decided, you can ask the person who made the decision to think about it again.
assessment	A check to see how you can do different things.
benefits	Money that the Government gives to people who need it because they are poor or cannot work.
benefits system	The way the Government pays benefits .
Disability Discrimination Act	A law that looks after the rights of ill or disabled people.
Disability Living Allowance	A benefit given to a disabled person who needs extra money because of their disability.
Disability Rights Commission	The office that looks after disabled people's rights.
discriminate	To treat someone unfairly because of their illness, disability, race, religion or age.
employee	A person who works for someone else.

employer	A person who gives jobs to other people.
Employment and Support Allowance	A new benefit instead of Incapacity Benefit and Income Support for ill or disabled people.
Green Paper	A book that says what the Government wants to do. It also asks people what they think about the Government's ideas.
Health and Safety Executive	A Government office that gives advice on the health and safety of people at work.
housing associations	Organisations that provide support and housing to people at rents people can afford.
Housing Benefit	A benefit paid to people who need extra help with paying their rent .
incapacity	A word used to describe people who cannot do some things.
Incapacity Benefit	Money that the Government gives to ill or disabled people who cannot work.
incapacity benefits	Means both Incapacity Benefit and Income Support for ill or disabled people in this booklet.
Income Support	A benefit for people who do not make enough money from work and need extra help.
interview	When someone talks to you to find out things about you.
job interview	When an employer talks to you to see if you can do a job.

Jobcentre Plus	Government offices that help people find jobs and give advice on claiming benefits .
Jobseeker's Allowance	A benefit you can get if you are looking for work.
landlord	Someone who owns houses or other buildings and charges rent to people who live in them.
local authorities	The councils that look after the local area.
Local Housing Allowance	A new sort of Housing Benefit .
National Minimum Wage	A Government plan that makes sure all people are paid a fair wage .
New Deal 25 plus	A Government plan that gives people over 25 years old extra help to find work.
New Deal for Disabled People	A Government plan that gives disabled people extra help to find work.
New Deal for Lone Parents	A Government plan that helps single parents get ready to go back to work.
non-state pension	A pension you get from your work when you retire .
part-time	Working less hours than other people.
Pathways to Work	A Government plan that helps disabled people and people with health problems to find work.
pension	Money you get when you stop work.

Personal Capability Assessment (PCA)	A Government check to see if you can go back to work.
private landlord	Someone who owns a private house or building and charges rent to people who live there.
rent	Money given to a landlord by a tenant for living in a house or flat.
retire	To stop work, usually because of old age.
retirement	The time after you have stopped working.
self-employed	Earning money by working for yourself.
Sick Certificate	A form your doctor fills in when you have taken time off work because you were ill.
skill	Something you can do well.
State Pension	The money paid by the Government to all people over a certain age to help them when they retire .
State Pension age	The age that the Government starts paying State Pension . At the moment the age is 65 for men and 60 for women.
Statutory Sick Pay	Money your employer pays you when you have taken time off work because you were ill.
tenant	A person who lives in a house or flat and pays rent to a landlord .
trade union	An organisation that looks after the rights of people at work.

unskilled work Work you do not need any special **skills** to do.

voluntary work Work you do in your spare time for free.

wage The money you are paid to do a job.

Working Tax Credit A **benefit** for people who are working but do not earn much money.

Workplace Health Connect A Government plan that gives advice on health, safety and going back to work in small companies.

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