

Reassessment of incapacity benefits

Support offered by Jobcentre Plus for customers
with additional support and communication needs

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jobcentreplus

Department for
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Reassessing incapacity benefits customers

Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support paid on the grounds of illness or disability are being phased out. Between October 2010 and 2014 people receiving these benefits will be reassessed to see if they are capable of work or qualify for Employment and Support Allowance. This is a new benefit that helps people with an illness or disability move into work and provides people with the support they need.

Many of our services are delivered over the telephone. However, if a customer cannot use the telephone we can make other arrangements to support them. This factsheet provides information about this support.

Letting us know about a customer's additional needs

Customers will receive a letter from Jobcentre Plus telling them that their benefit is being reassessed. Jobcentre Plus will then call the customer to discuss how this change will affect them and to answer any questions. During this telephone call the customer will be asked if they have any additional communications needs. Jobcentre Plus will make a note of this and will try to contact the customer using their preferred method where possible.

Customers can also contact Jobcentre Plus to advise of any additional communications needs. Telephone and textphone numbers to contact Jobcentre Plus are on the letter sent to the customer advising that their benefit is being reassessed. This information can also be found on www.direct.gov.uk.

Customer representatives

When dealing with Jobcentre Plus, customers may wish to have help from a representative. Jobcentre Plus cannot arrange representatives but will support a customer's right to have representation. Representatives may include:

- Advice or welfare rights organisations
- Professionals such as social workers, community nurses or doctors
- Family members or friends
- Carers
- MPs
- Appointees and people with Power of Attorney

Unless the representative is an MP, Appointee or a person with Power of Attorney, Jobcentre Plus cannot give information without:

- Written signed authority from the customer
- The customer being present to confirm their consent
- 'Implicit consent' being established

To establish ‘implicit consent’ the representative must be able to answer questions about the customer. The Jobcentre Plus member of staff will decide if the representative is genuine based on the answers to these questions and the information asked for by the representative.

Customers for whom English is not their first language

Customers with limited or no ability to speak English can request letters in different languages. Jobcentre Plus will help arrange this for the customer.

If a customer needs an interpreter during a telephone call, Jobcentre Plus will check if they can provide their own interpreter. If not, a Jobcentre Plus member of staff may be able to act as an interpreter or ‘The Big Word’ interpreting service will be used. Through the ‘The Big Word’ Jobcentre Plus staff can arrange for an interpreter to join the call.

Jobcentre Plus can also arrange for an interpreter to be present during face to face interviews, or the customer can bring their own interpreter providing the interpreter is over 16 and fluent in both languages.

Customers who are blind or visually impaired

Customers who are blind or visually impaired can have letters and leaflets in braille, large print or audio format. Alternative formats for forms and guidance may be supplied upon request. If they want correspondence in alternative formats customers should contact Jobcentre Plus.

Customers with hearing and speech impairments

Customers with hearing and speech impairments can contact Jobcentre Plus via Textbox/Textphone or RNID typetalk service. The contact number for Textbox/Textphone is provided within letters to customers. This information can also be found on www.direct.gov.uk. Information on how to access the RNID typetalk service can be found on www.rnid.org.uk.

All Jobcentres have an induction loop and an interpreter can be present at interviews. This can include British Sign Language interpreters, Lipspeakers, Deafblind interpreters or the customer’s own interpreter. The customer must tell Jobcentre Plus before an interview if they want an interpreter to be present.

Attending appointments

Most Jobcentres have ramps and lifts, however, all Jobcentres can make alternative arrangements for customers with accessibility needs.

If a customer feels unable to attend an examination centre for a Work Capability Assessment, a home visit or taxi to the examination centre may be available if medical evidence is provided to support this. If a customer wants to discuss anything

about attending their assessment they should contact Atos Healthcare. Information on how to contact Atos is included at the end of this fact sheet.

Completing the Limited Capability for Work Questionnaire

When filling in the “Limited capability for work questionnaire”, customers can get help. They can ask a friend or relative to help, or they can get in touch with Jobcentre Plus. Jobcentre Plus staff can go through any questions that customers have difficulty with over the telephone and sometimes they may be able to fill in the form on the customer’s behalf. If Jobcentre Plus staff do this, they will send the completed form to the customer, asking them to check, sign and return.

If required, Jobcentre Plus can send completed claim forms in braille or large print for the customer to sign and return.

If the customer needs help to fill in the form but can’t use the telephone, the customer will need to make an appointment to attend their local Jobcentre for a face to face meeting.

When a Jobcentre Plus member of staff assists the customer in filling in the form, they can only perform, a ‘transcribing’ service, writing down exactly what the customer replies to the questions asked.

Further information

Jobcentre Plus will try to meet any ‘reasonable adjustment’ request made by the customer.

If further details are required about the information in this factsheet, or a customer has an additional need that is not mentioned, please contact Jobcentre Plus. Contact information can be found on www.direct.gov.uk.

If a customer needs to contact Atos Healthcare to discuss attending their Work Capability Assessment they can do so on 0800 2888 777. Lines are open 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm Saturday.

For customers with hearing or speech impairments, Atos Healthcare can be contacted via textphone on 18001 0800 2888 777.

Important information

This information pack is only a guide and does not cover every circumstance. We have done our best to make sure that the information in this information pack is correct as of February 2011. It is possible that some of the information is oversimplified, or may become inaccurate over time, for example because of changes to the law.