



# Report on incapacity benefits and Pathways to Work

Easy read

This booklet is about the Government's ideas for changing the law about **incapacity benefits**. It also tells you about what other people think of our ideas and about what we are planning to do.

When we say '**we**' in this booklet, we mean the **Department for Work and Pensions**. When we say 'the **Department**' we also mean the **Department for Work and Pensions**.



When we say '**Committee**', we mean the **Select Committee**.

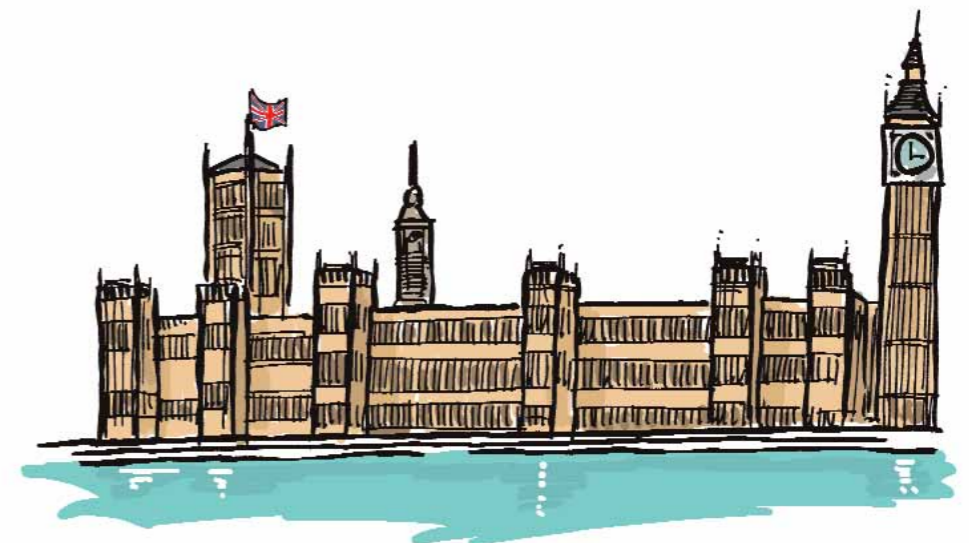
A **Select Committee** is a group of people who work in Government. The **Committee** looks at ideas for new laws and tells the Government what they think of the ideas.



There is a list of some words and names in this booklet and what they mean on page 40. These words are in **purple** letters.

There is a lot of information in this booklet. You might like to have support when you look at it.

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# What is this booklet about?

This booklet tells you what the **Select Committee** said about the Government's ideas for changing **incapacity benefits** and **Pathways to Work**.

The booklet also tells you about the Government's reply to the **Select Committee**.

This booklet tells you about some of the things the **Committee** wrote about in a longer booklet called **Report on Incapacity Benefits and Pathways to Work**. If you want to know more about what the report said you can read it at [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmworpen.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmworpen.htm)

We are pleased the **Select Committee** has looked at our ideas for **incapacity benefits** and **Pathways to Work**.

The **Committee** liked some of our ideas. But they said there are some things that we need to think harder about.



**Incapacity benefits** are money that the Government gives to ill or disabled people who cannot work.

**Pathways to Work** is a Government plan that helps disabled people and people with health problems to find work.

## We want to:

- Help as many ill or disabled people as possible to go to work if they want to
- Make it easier for ill or disabled people to find jobs
- Make sure ill or disabled people already in work stay happy.



## This booklet tells you about:

- What the **Select Committee** said we need to think harder about
- What we are going to do now.

The numbers in this booklet next to what the **Committee** said are the same numbers that they used in the longer booklet, **Report on Incapacity Benefits and Pathways to Work**.

## Helping people to work – what you told us

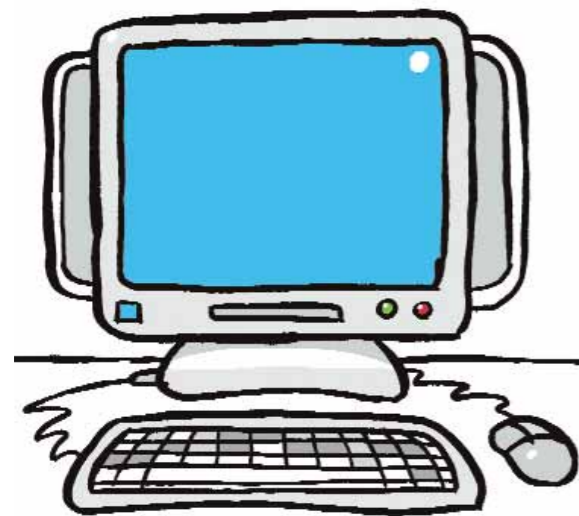
The Government asked you what you thought about our ideas for **incapacity benefits** and **Pathways to Work** in a booklet called **Helping people to work**.



We then wrote about what you thought about our ideas in a booklet called **Helping people to work – What people told us**.

You can find out more about our ideas for helping people to come off **benefits** and go back to work in these 2 booklets.

You can get copies of these booklets from [www.dwp.gov.uk/aboutus/welfarereform](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/aboutus/welfarereform)



The rest of this booklet is about what the **Committee** said, and what we said to the **Committee**.

## Helping people come off incapacity benefits

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



### 1. The Committee said

- The **Committee** welcomes the Government's plans to lower the number of people on **incapacity benefits** by 1 million. It will be hard to do this by 2016. If it is to work, the Government must spend time and money now.
- The Government should tell us the numbers of people who are going to get **incapacity benefits** at the beginning.

### What we said to the Committee

- We know that helping lots of people come off **incapacity benefits** will be hard work. But we want to do this because it will be good for everyone. We think **Pathways to Work** will help more people get ready to go back to work.
- We will make sure we tell people about how our plans are going.



## 2. The Committee said

- The **Committee** is disappointed that they have not yet been told the number of people who could be on **incapacity benefits** in the future.

## What we said to the Committee

- We have now worked out the numbers. You can find them at [www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure.asp](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure.asp)



We know that a lot of people who get incapacity benefits would like to go to work if they could. We want to make sure we help people to do this.



## Statutory Sick Pay

**Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)** is money an **employer** must pay to people when they are sick and off work. We want to make the rules about **SSP** easier to understand.

## 3. The Committee said

- It should be clear how important **sick certificates** are in getting **SSP**.



## What we said to the Committee

- **SSP** is not paid to someone who is sick and off work for the first 3 days.
- People who want to claim **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)** will give us a **sick certificate** from their doctor at the start. They will then have to see one of the **Department for Work and Pensions'** doctors in the first 3 months they are off work.  
**ESA** is a new benefit instead of **incapacity benefits**. We tell you more about ESA on page 15.
- After that, they will have to see one of our doctors from time to time to check they should still get **ESA**.

#### 4. The Committee said

- It would be good if we could make **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)** simpler.
- Doctors need to know what they have to do.
- The Government needs to work with doctors and other health workers to make sure that everyone is happy with what they have to do.



#### What we said to the Committee

- We know that some people do not agree with our ideas for making **SSP** simpler. So we have decided not to change the rules now. We will carry on talking with people to try to find a change that everyone is happy about.
- We are already talking to doctors and other health workers about all our ideas on **benefit** payments. A special group of doctors and health workers is helping us to make decisions about what changes we can make.



#### 5. The Committee said

- The Government should make sure people are on the right **benefit**.



#### What we said to the Committee

- We know that people who work at **Jobcentre Plus** must understand the different sorts of **benefits**. We already give them lots of training about the different **benefits**. **Jobcentre Plus** are Government offices that help people find jobs and give advice on claiming **benefits**.
- People will carry on getting **Jobseeker's Allowance** if they are ill for a short time. If they are ill or disabled for a longer time they will get **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**.



#### Personal Capability Assessment

**Personal Capability Assessment (PCA)** is the medical test to decide if someone should get **ESA**. We also want the medical test to find out which people could work. We could then help them to find a job doing the sort of work they could do.



## 6. The Committee said

- The new medical test is a good idea. But it needs to look more at disabled people's lives, not just decide if they should get **benefits**.



## What we said to the Committee

- The medical test is very good because it already finds out if people can work and what kind of work they can do.
- But we want to do more. We will look at the medical test again to see how we can make it better.
- We are also asking other people to look at the medical test to see how we can make it better. They will tell us what they think in September 2006.

## 7. The Committee said

- The **Department** should look at the mental health part of the medical test again. It should ask people with mental health problems and their carers and mental health organisations what they think.
- The **Department** should check the new medical test first to make sure that it works properly.



## What we said to the Committee

- We are talking to **experts** in mental health problems to make sure that the new medical test works properly. We will then check the new medical test.

## 8. The Committee said

- It is good to try to do the medical test within 3 months. But people should not suffer if there are delays.



## 9. The Committee said

- The **Department** should have a system to decide which claims they will look at again.



## What we said to the Committee

- We will try hard to make sure that people have the new medical test within 3 months.
- But if we cannot do this, we will make sure that people do not lose out on any money.



## What we said to the Committee

- We will set up a system to look at people's health when they claim **benefits** for the first time and then after they have been on **benefits** for some time.
- We will also pick some other cases to check to make sure that all people are getting the right **benefits**.



## 10. The Committee said

- The **Department** needs to think more about a medical test for people whose health keeps changing. The **Department** should talk to lots of people about this.



## What we said to the Committee

- We give **benefits** to people who find it difficult to work because they are ill or disabled. If someone's health keeps changing, we will look at how this might stop them from getting a job.
- We will work with **employers** to see how we can help people whose health or disability changes while they are at work.



jobcentreplus

- **Jobcentre Plus** already helps people whose health or disability changes a lot. They will work to make sure they do this even better.

## 11. The Committee said

- The **Department** should make sure that it gets the medical test right first time.
- The **Department** should look hard at how long it takes to do the medical test.



- Doctors should get more training so that they can do the medical test properly.
- Doctors should make sure that they get all the right information.

## What we said to the Committee

- We already have good rules for doctors about how to do a medical test and we are getting better at making the right decision first time.
- We check how long a medical test takes and we have made training better for doctors.



## 12. The Committee said

- It is important for everyone to tell us what they think about the new medical test.



- The **Committee** wants to see what the new medical test will look like as soon as possible.

## What we said to the Committee

- We are working on the new medical test as fast as we can. But we also want to talk to more health professionals to help us get new ideas.



- We will finish this work by September 2006.



- Then we will check the new medical test to see if it works better.

We want to replace incapacity benefits with a new benefit called the **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**.



## 13. The Committee said

- The **Committee** is worried that people who start claiming **ESA** may not be getting enough money. The **Committee** does not think that people should get the same amount as people getting **Jobseeker's Allowance**. People should get the same amount as people getting **Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)**.



- It would not be fair to give less money to younger people.



## What we said to the Committee

- At the start of a claim for **ESA**, people will get the same money as the basic amounts that people get on **Jobseeker's Allowance**. After they have had their medical test we will decide if they should get more money.



- Young people claiming **ESA** for 3 months who have had their medical test will get the same money as older people.

#### 14. The Committee said

- The **Committee** wants to know how much money people will get on **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**.



- The **Department** should work with disability organisations to look at how **ESA** will affect disabled people. People already on **benefits** should not lose money when the new **benefit** comes in.

#### What we said to the Committee

- We have not yet decided how much money people will get on the main part of **ESA**.



- But when people have been assessed, they will get more money than the amount people get on long-term Incapacity Benefit now. People who are getting **incapacity benefits** now will not get less money when it changes to **ESA**.

#### 15. The Committee said

- The **Committee** wants to know how the **Department** will decide how much money people claiming **ESA** will get.



#### 16. The Committee said

- The **Department** needs to make sure that all disabled people can access all of its services.
- The **Committee** wants the **Department** to make sure that its **advisers** are being properly trained.



#### What we said to the Committee

- We are looking at what other people have said would be the right amount of money to give to people claiming **ESA**. But we have not decided yet how much **ESA** will be.



#### What we said to the Committee

- We have improved our training for our **advisers** and they also get help from other disability professionals.



- We will continue to make training better for **advisers** to make sure that they can help all disabled people.

## 17. The Committee said

- If a person has been trying to get a job for a year but hasn't got one, then their action plan should be looked at again. It may be that the plan is no longer right. Other people should be involved in this.



- Once the new **benefit** has been going for 2 years, the system should be checked to make sure that it is working properly.

## What we said to the Committee

- Our **advisers** talk to people they are helping regularly to make sure they are happy.
- We will keep checking to find out better ways of helping people to move into work.



## 18. The Committee said

- The **Committee** is worried that it could be confusing to bring in a **benefit** where people get paid 2 different amounts. People will want to claim the highest amount of money.



## 19. The Committee said

- The **Department** should say clearly how people can change from getting one amount of **ESA** to getting a different amount.

## What we said to the Committee

- Some people can do things that will help them to get a job. But it would not be right to expect some other people to do things to help them to get a job because they are too ill or disabled. That is why we need to split **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)** into 2 different amounts.



## What we said to the Committee

- Our **advisers** will talk to people to find out more about them. We will then use this information to decide if someone should move from one part of **ESA** to the other part.



# How well is Pathways to Work working?

## 20. The Committee said

- The **Department** should publish information every 3 months on how well **Pathways to Work** is working.

## 21. The Committee said

- **Advisers** have an important job to do in helping people to move into work.
- **Advisers** need to be well trained. The **Committee** thinks that **advisers** need more training on disability issues and mental health. **Advisers** also need to know about all the **benefits** and **tax credits** people can apply for and how much money they will get when they start a job.

A **tax credit** is money paid by the Government to help people who do not get paid much money from their job.

- **Advisers** need to be helped to learn new things from each other.

## What we said to the Committee

- We will do this. At the moment we are thinking about the best way to do this.

## What we said to the Committee

- We know training for **advisers** is very important. We have already looked carefully at this.
- **Advisers** talk to each other to pass on good ideas and they can also talk to **experts** to get more information.



## 22. The Committee said

- The **Department** should make sure that **advisers** do not have too much work.
- **Advisers** need to have enough time to help people properly.



## What we said to the Committee

- Managers will make sure that **advisers** do not have too much work.
- **Advisers** will get help from other people in **Jobcentre Plus**.

## 23. The Committee said

- The **Committee** is worried that there will not be enough people to do all the work needed to help people to move into work.

## What we said to the Committee

- We think that we will have enough **advisers** to do the extra work.



- We are giving extra training to **advisers** to help them to do their job well.

## 24. The Committee said

- The **Department** should make sure that they are paying **advisers** enough. If the pay is too low then people will not want to be **advisers**.



## What we said to the Committee

- **Advisers** will be paid between £18,160 and £23,510 from 1 July 2006.
- We think that this pay is the right amount for **advisers**.

## 25. The Committee said

- The letter that people get asking them to come for an interview should say things that make people want to come to the interview.



## What we said to the Committee

- We are already looking at all of our leaflets and letters. We will make sure we make them as helpful and easy to understand as possible.

## 26. The Committee said

- The **Committee** thinks that the **Condition Management Programme** is important.

The **Condition Management Programme** is a way of helping people who are sick to find ways of working.



- **Advisers** need to know more about the **Condition Management Programme** and how to refer people to it.
- There may not be enough **therapists** to provide the **Condition Management Programme** across the whole country.

A **therapist** is someone who helps people to get better.

## What we said to the Committee

- People who work on the **Condition Management Programme** are helping to train **advisers**.



- We are working with the **Department of Health** to make sure that there are enough **therapists** to help people.
- We are also using other ways to help people.

## 27. The Committee said

- The **Department** should check to make sure that all disabled people can get the help they need.



## What we said to the Committee

- We have made sure our buildings are easy for everyone to visit. We have made sure all our services are easy to understand.



- We have made sure that companies who work with us also make their services available to everyone.

## 28. The Committee said

- **Return to Work Credit** is good. But there may be problems when this ends after 52 weeks. **Return to Work Credit** is money that the Government gives to some people when they start a job.



## What we said to the Committee

- We make sure that **advisers** tell people when they will stop getting this money.



- We know that most people make plans so that they can cope when the **Return to Work Credit** stops.

## 29. The Committee said

- Many people on **incapacity benefits** cannot go straight from being on **benefits** into a job. **Advisers** need to know about the different things that people can do that will help them start to move towards getting a job.



- **Advisers** should work with **employers** to find more ways of helping people to get jobs. People could do part-time work or work without getting paid.
- People should be allowed to earn more money while they are claiming the **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**. People should be able to work for at least 4 hours a week on the **national minimum wage**. The **national minimum wage** is a Government plan that makes sure people are paid enough.

## What we said to the Committee

- We make sure everyone who helps disabled people has the right information and trains their staff well.



- We work with **employers** to make sure they can help disabled people as much as possible.
- **ESA** will allow people to try out working and carry on claiming **benefits**. We know this helps people to get used to working.



### 30. The Committee said

- The **Committee** is worried that people already on **incapacity benefits** will not get help because all the help will go to new people claiming **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**.



- The **Department** should say when everyone on **incapacity benefits** will get help.
- The **Department** should also talk to people to find out how to help people who have been claiming **benefits** for years.

### What we said to the Committee

- We will move people already on **incapacity benefits** on to **ESA**. But we cannot do this all at once.
- Anyone on **incapacity benefits** can say they want to get more help to go back to work.



### 31. The Committee said

- The **Committee** thinks that it is a good thing that other companies and charities are helping the **Department** to help people to find work.



- The **Committee** thinks that these companies and charities should not be allowed to stop someone's **benefit**. Only the **Department** should be able to decide to do this.

### 32. The Committee said

- The **Committee** thinks that it is good that the **Department** pays other companies who help people to find jobs.
- The **Committee** thinks that the **Department** should pay companies for other help that they give people.

### What we said to the Committee

- At the moment the **Department** will be the only one who can stop someone's **benefits**, but we are talking to people to find out if we should change this.



### What we said to the Committee

- We are trying to find out the best way to pay companies to make sure that they do a good job. We will tell people about what we decide as soon as we can.



### 33. The Committee said

- The **Department** should be clear about what it is going to do about the other help that it provides.

### What we said to the Committee

- We are looking at all the different help that we provide to decide what are the best things for us to do. We will decide what we are going to do as soon as we can.



### 34. The Committee said

- Some areas have a lot of people claiming **incapacity benefits**. The **Department** should give more help to people in these areas.
- The **Department** should work with local councils and the governments in Scotland and Wales.

### What we said to the Committee

- We have already made things better in some areas. But there is more to do.
- We have talked to lots of people in local areas and we are going to test our new plans to help more people move off **incapacity benefits**.



### 35. The Committee said

- The Government should tell more people about **Rehabilitation Leave**.

**Rehabilitation Leave** is time off work to give sick people a chance to get better. This leave could help people recover from an illness and stay in work.



### What we said to the Committee

- We think **Rehabilitation Leave** can help some people who have been ill or who have a disability. We have changed the law to allow people to use **Rehabilitation Leave**. At the moment we don't think that we need to do anything more.



### 36. The Committee said

- The **Committee** thinks that the **Department** should do more to help people after they have got a job.



### What we said to the Committee

- We do help people after they have got a job. We know that some people need help when they change from living on **benefits** and start work. We make sure that **advisers** talk to people when they start a new job to make sure things are going well.



### 37. The Committee said

- The **Access to Work** scheme gives useful support to disabled people who know about it. But not a lot of **employers** or disabled people do know about it.

**Access to Work** is money the Government gives to disabled people in jobs to help them pay for things to help them to do that job.



- The **Department** should tell more people about **Access to Work** and give the scheme more money.



### What we said to the Committee

- We are spending a lot more money on **Access to Work** than we used to. We spent £59.5 million in 2004 and helped 32,000 people to find or keep jobs.



- We spend £300,000 every year telling people about **Access to Work**.
- Most disabled people do not need help from **Access to Work**.

### 38. The Committee said

- **Employers** do not understand disability issues.



- The **Department** should do more to make **employers** think that disabled people are good workers.
- The **Department** should think about ways to give **employers** money to help them pay disabled people's wages.



### What we said to the Committee

- We have written letters to lots of companies to tell them that disabled people can work just as well as other people. We have also given **employers** lots of information to help them understand more about disabled people.



- We are looking at all of the ways that we help disabled people to move into work and we are seeing if we can make them better.

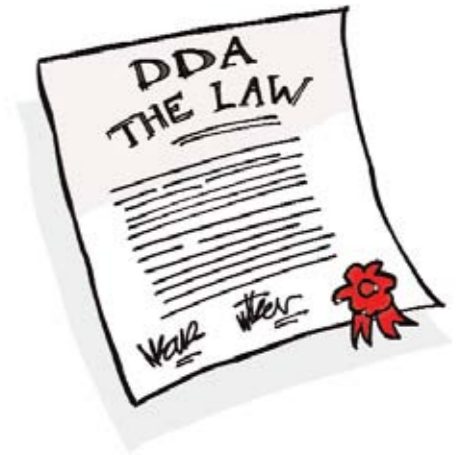
### 39. The Committee said

- The **Disability Discrimination Act** is very important to help disabled people. But a lot of **employers** do not seem to know much about it. The **Disability Discrimination Act** is a law to make sure that disabled people get treated fairly.
- The **Department** should do more to tell people about the **Disability Discrimination Act**.
- The **Department** should tell other parts of the Government to give more jobs to people who have had a mental illness.



### What we said to the Committee

- We know that we need to explain the **Disability Discrimination Act** to more people.



- That is why we have printed leaflets that tell people more about what they need to do for disabled people.
- We have now got an Office for Disability Issues. They are helping other parts of Government to understand more about disabled people and are helping them to give more jobs to disabled people.

# The cost of Pathways to Work and the new benefits system

## 40. The Committee said

- The **Department** should give more details about how the money is going to be spent on **Pathways to Work**. The **Committee** wants to know if the **Department** will be spending enough money on **Pathways to Work** across the whole country.



- If the **Department** does not spend enough money then **Pathways to Work** will not work very well.

## What we said to the Committee

- We have not finished planning how to spend all the money. We will let people know how the money will be spent as soon as we can.
- We will make sure that the right amount of money is spent on **Pathways to Work**.



## 41. The Committee said

- The **Department** should publish figures at least 2 times a year on how many people are on **incapacity benefits**. They should say how long it will take to help 1 million people to get off **incapacity benefits**.

## What we said to the Committee

- We already say how many people are on **incapacity benefits** 4 times a year.



## 42. The Committee said

- The **Department** does not have enough money to help people already claiming **incapacity benefits**. People already on **incapacity benefits** should get the same help as new people who claim **incapacity benefits**.

## What we said to the Committee

- We have said that we want to give more help to everyone on **incapacity benefits**.
- Some people already ask for more help to find work. We will help even more people as soon as we can afford it. We also want to make sure that we are spending money on the right sort of help to get people into a job.

### 43 & 44. The Committee said

- The **Committee** is worried that the **Department** has only just started building the new computer system it needs for the new **benefit**.



- The **Department** is not very good with new computer systems and so it needs to do more work quickly.
- The **Department** should be talking to all the people involved in building a new computer system.
- The **Committee** wants to know about the plans and problems for the computer system as soon as possible.

### What we said to the Committee

- We are talking to all the people involved and writing our plans. We are doing lots of work so we can make a good computer system.



### 45. The Committee said

- The **Committee** is pleased that the **Department** has said it is not going to have fewer **advisers**.
- The money to spend on training the **advisers** should also be kept safe.

### What we said to the Committee

- We will make sure that there is enough money to pay for training **advisers**.



## How to find out more

### 46. The Committee said

- The **Committee** hopes that the **Department** will make sure that it gets enough money from the Government to make all the changes it needs to help ill and disabled people.



- It is important to spend money on these changes so that money can be saved by the **Department** in other places.

### What we said to the Committee

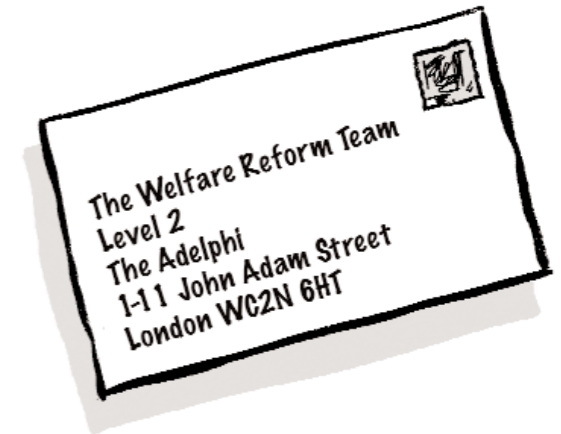
- We are going to make sure that we get enough money to do everything we have talked about.
- We are looking at how we can save money but we will make sure that we still give a good quality service to everyone.



If you want to know more, you can visit our website:  
[www.dwp.gov.uk/aboutus/welfarereform](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/aboutus/welfarereform)

#### Or you can write to us at:

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## 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.

<b>Access to Work</b>	Government money to help disabled people in jobs pay for things they need to help them to do that job.
<b>adviser</b>	Someone who gives help to people with finding a job or claiming <b>benefits</b> .
<b>benefits</b>	Money that the Government gives to people who need it because they are poor or cannot work.
<b>Committee</b>	The <b>Select Committee</b> .
<b>Condition Management Programme</b>	This is a way of helping people who are ill to find ways of working.
<b>Department</b>	The <b>Department for Work and Pensions</b> .
<b>Department of Health</b>	The part of the Government that looks after helping people who are ill to get better.
<b>Department for Work and Pensions</b>	The part of the Government that looks after people who need <b>benefits</b> and people who need help to get a job.
<b>Disability Discrimination Act</b>	A law that looks after the rights of ill or disabled people.
<b>employer</b>	A person who gives jobs to other people.
<b>Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)</b>	A new <b>benefit</b> instead of incapacity benefits for ill or disabled people.
<b>expert</b>	Someone who knows a lot about something.

<b>incapacity benefits</b>	Money that the Government gives to ill or disabled people who cannot work.
<b>Jobcentre Plus</b>	Government offices that help people to find jobs and give advice on claiming <b>benefits</b> .
<b>Jobseeker's Allowance</b>	A <b>benefit</b> you can get if you are looking for work.
<b>national minimum wage</b>	A Government plan which makes sure people are paid enough for the work they do.
<b>Pathways to Work</b>	A Government plan that helps disabled people and people with health problems to find work.
<b>Personal Capability Assessment (PCA)</b>	The medical test to decide if someone should get <b>Employment and Support Allowance</b> .
<b>Rehabilitation Leave</b>	Time off work to give sick people a chance to get better.
<b>Return to Work Credit</b>	Money that the Government gives to some people when they start a job.
<b>Select Committee</b>	A group of people who work in Government. The <b>Committee</b> looks at ideas for new laws and tells the Government what they think of the ideas.
<b>sick certificate</b>	A form your doctor fills in when you have to take time off work because you are ill.
<b>Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)</b>	Money your <b>employer</b> pays you when you take time off work because you are ill.
<b>tax credit</b>	Money paid by the Government to help people who do not get much money from their job.
<b>therapist</b>	A person who helps people to get better.