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## **Benefits for disabled people at 16+**

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**If you have a disability you can usually claim benefits in your own right for the first time when you reach the age of 16, rather than your parents or carers claiming for you, even if you are staying on at school. This leaflet looks at two of the main benefits that you could claim.**

## **Disability Living Allowance (DLA)**

DLA is paid to people who need help with their care or who have difficulty getting around. It is not affected by income or savings. It is based on what help a person needs, rather than the care they receive.

If you have a long-term disability you may well have claimed DLA already so this leaflet does not cover it in detail. However, some of the DLA rules change at 16 so DLA entitlement might change. There is an extra disability test for children under 16, which states that their needs must be substantially more than another person of the same age who is in normal physical and mental health. This test is removed at the age of 16. Also people at 16 can qualify under the 'cooking test', which looks at a person's ability to cook a main meal.

## **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**

This is a new benefit which replaces Incapacity Benefit and Income Support. At the moment it is only available to new claimants but eventually everyone who is on Incapacity Benefit or Income Support (because of incapacity) will move over to ESA.

ESA is a work-focused benefit. It aims to encourage people into work if they are able enough.

There are two aspects to Employment and Support Allowance; contributory ESA and income-related ESA.

## Contributory ESA

Usually you would need to have paid National Insurance contributions to get contributory ESA but you could receive it if you are aged 16 to 20 years old and you:

- Can produce a certificate from your doctor (known as a sick note or medical certificate) to show that you have been unable to work for at least 28 weeks and are currently unable to work. Ask your GP for a medical certificate backdated for at least 28 weeks, plus a current certificate.
- Satisfy some residence conditions, and are not subject to immigration control
- Are not in 'ordinary' full-time education. If you are at a special school this is not a problem. If you do not go to a special school you will need to show that some of the classes you are doing would not be suitable for people of the same age without a disability. This means that either the teaching methods or what is taught must be different. Where you are doing a mixture of 'special' and 'ordinary' education you can still qualify for ESA providing that the supervised 'ordinary' education is less than 21 hours a week.

Some young people who are between the ages of 20 and 25 could qualify for contributory ESA if they started studying before the age of 20.

Contributory ESA is not affected by savings or income other than earnings.

## Income-related ESA

This is the means-tested replacement for Income Support. If you have no other income apart from your DLA you will probably receive income-related ESA on top of your contributory ESA. There is no qualifying period for income-related ESA so you could start to get it straight away.

## Assessment phase

The first 13 weeks of your claim is known as the assessment phase. If you are not entitled to income-related ESA you will have to complete a 28-week qualifying period before you can enter the assessment phase. During the assessment phase you will usually be paid at £50.95 a week. If you are on income-related ESA and your DLA care component is paid at the highest rate you will get an extra £13.40 on your ESA, making a total of £64.35 a week.

During the assessment phase you will undergo a 'work capability assessment', which will decide if you are entitled to any more ESA and what will happen at the end of the 13 weeks. You will also have a work-focused interview after the 8th week of your claim. If you are severely disabled you can ask for this interview to be waived (cancelled). If the interview is not waived you must attend and take part in it, otherwise you could have some of your ESA taken off you.

If the outcome of your assessment is that you can continue on ESA you will be put into one of two groups.

## Support group

People who are very severely disabled and are not able to take part in any work-related activity will be put into the support group. If you are put in this group you will usually receive ESA of £95.15 a week. If you are on income-related ESA you will get an extra £13.40 on your ESA, making a total of £108.55 a week.

## Work-related activity group

If you are not put into the support group you will be given an assessment to look at barriers to work and what support you could receive to help you into work. Your assessments will all take place at the same time. You will be asked to attend another 5 work-focused interviews. You must attend all the interviews and take part in them, otherwise you could have some of your ESA taken off you.

If you are put in this group you will usually receive ESA of £89.80 a week. If you are on income-related ESA and your DLA care component is paid at the highest rate you will get an extra £13.40 on your ESA, making a total of £103.20 a week.

## **Severe Disability Premium**

Some people who live on their own or with other disabled people may also be entitled to the Severe Disability Premium (£52.85) in their income-related ESA. The rules for this premium are complicated so you will need to get advice about this.

## **More information about ESA**

If you have access to the internet you could look at the ESA guide which is published by the Disability Alliance. It contains more details about ESA, including the questions that are asked at the work capability assessment. It also tells you about what work you can do if you still want to get ESA. The address is [www.dwp.gov.uk/esa/pdfs/esa-disability-alliance-guide.pdf](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/esa/pdfs/esa-disability-alliance-guide.pdf)

# **When to claim**

## **DLA**

Usually someone else will have made a claim for Disability Living Allowance on your behalf before your 16th birthday. The claim is usually due for renewal at around the time of your 16th birthday. You can then make your own claim, providing you are able to deal with your own affairs. Those young people who are unable to deal with their own affairs will need to have someone appointed by the Department for Work and Pensions to act on their behalf.

## **Employment and Support Allowance**

If your parents do not receive means-tested benefits themselves you should claim Employment and Support Allowance at your 16th birthday.



However, if your parents are claiming means-tested benefits such as Income Support, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance or Child Tax Credit (paid at a rate which exceeds the family element) the amount of money you will receive between the whole family can drop significantly when you start to claim for yourself. In this case your parents should continue to claim for you. If you are included in your parents' means-tested benefits, whether you have siblings or not, it would be a good idea to seek expert advice before making any changes. Your local Jobcentre Plus should be able to do a 'better off' calculation for you.

## **Other help you might be entitled to**

### **Blue Badge**

If you receive DLA higher rate mobility component you could apply for a Disabled Person's Parking Badge (known as the Blue Badge). Application forms are held by the receptionists at all the local Social Care offices in the county, or you could ring County Hall on 0116 305 0001. You will need to supply a photo of yourself.

### **Motability**

This is a Government funded charity. If you receive DLA higher rate mobility component you could exchange it for a specially adapted car, which you would take out on a 3 year lease. You might have to pay some extra money as well. You can get details from any car sales showroom that displays the Motability logo, or from the Motability organisation on [www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk) or

01279 632067.

## NHS charges

If you receive income-related ESA you will automatically be entitled to help with NHS charges such as prescriptions, sight tests and dental treatment. If you only qualify for contributory ESA you could still apply for help on the low-income scheme. You could ask for a form HC1 from your doctor, pharmacist, dentist or optician.

## Useful numbers

### County

If you live in the county and you are already receiving a service from Social Care Services you could ring your Social Care worker or your local Social Care office. Otherwise you could contact a voluntary organisation such as Citizens Advice Bureau.

### City Welfare Rights Advice Line

If you live in the city ring **0116 254 3399**  
Monday to Wednesday 1.00pm – 4.00pm

### Department for Work and Pensions Jobcentre Plus

To make a new claim to Employment and Support Allowance ring the Contact Centre on **0800 0556688**.

If you are aged under 18 the Contact Centre will probably send you a claim form and then refer you on to one of the local Jobcentres.

If you are aged 18 or over the Contact Centre will probably take your claim over the phone.

If you require this information in an alternative version such as large print, Braille, tape or help in understanding it in your language, please contact 0116 234 7404.

જો આપ આ માહિતી આપની ભાષામાં સમજવામાં થોડી મદદ ઇચ્છતાં હો તો 0116 305 7404 નંબર પર ફોન કરશો અને અમે આપને મદદ કરવા યત્ન કરીશું.

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਮਦਦ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0116 305 7404 ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕਰ ਦਵਾਂਗੇ।

এই তথ্য নিজের ভাষায় বুঝার জন্য আপনার যদি কোন সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, তবে 0116 305 7404 এই নম্বরে ফোন করলে আমরা উপযুক্ত ব্যক্তির ব্যবস্থা করবো।

假如閣下需要幫助，用你的語言去明白這些資訊，請致電 0116 305 7404，我們會安排有關人員為你提供幫助。

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tej informacji w Twoim języku, zadzwoń pod numer 0116 305 7404, a my Ci pomożemy.