

# Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

## For Blind and Partially Sighted People 2009/2010

**This fact sheet tells you how to claim Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). It is useful for severely sight impaired (blind) and sight impaired (partially sighted) people and those individuals and organisations which support them.**

### **What is Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)?**

ESA is a new benefit which replaced Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) and Income Support (IS) on the grounds of incapacity from 27 October 2008. ESA forms part of the Government's welfare reform programme.

### **Existing Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support claimants**

If you were already in receipt of Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance or Income Support on the grounds of incapacity prior to ESA being introduced, you will remain on that benefit for the time being. However, it is the Government's intention to migrate existing Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support claimants onto ESA, so that all claimants will eventually be brought under the same system.

Incapacity Benefit and Income Support claimants under 25 will become subject to mandatory Work-Focused Interviews and the Work Capability Assessment from 2009. Migration of claimants over 25 is expected to begin in 2010.



**Action for blind people**

## What are the rules for claiming ESA?

ESA is made up of two elements; a contributory element and an income-related element. To qualify you must satisfy the following basic conditions of entitlement:

- be aged 16 or over and under pension age (currently 60 for women and 65 for men);
- be resident in Great Britain and not subject to immigration control;
- not be entitled to Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Statutory Sick Pay (SSP);
- have 'limited capability for work' (see below).

You must also satisfy **either**:

- the national insurance contribution conditions for contributory ESA; **or**
- the means-test for income-related ESA.

### Contributory ESA - The national insurance contribution rules

If you are over 20 years of age you must satisfy the following conditions:

- in one of the previous three tax years, have paid some Class 1 or 2 contributions to the value of 25 times the lower earnings limit; **and**
- in each of the two previous complete tax years, have paid or been credited with, contributions to the value of 50 times the lower earnings limit.

The lower earnings limit is the lowest wage you can earn and have to pay national insurance contributions. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will treat any credits that are earned as a carer as actual national insurance payments. They may also treat you as meeting the contribution conditions if you were getting the disability element of Working Tax Credit.

For further information contact your Jobcentre Plus office, or HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

If you are under 20 years of age you can qualify for contributory ESA without satisfying the above national insurance conditions, as long as you:

- have had limited capability for work for a period of at least 196 days (days before your 16th birthday can count towards this);
- are not in full-time education;
- are not subject to immigration control and satisfy 'basic conditions' relating to residence and presence in Great Britain.

Under certain circumstances, the age limit can be extended to 25 for claimants who are in education or training at the time they turn 20. For more information see our **Young People and Students** fact sheet.

## Income-related ESA - The qualifying conditions

In order to qualify for income-related ESA you must:

- have capital below £16,000;
- have no income, or income which does not exceed your applicable amount (see below);
- not be in remunerative work
- not have a partner in remunerative work of more than 24 hours a week
- not be entitled to Pension Credit, or have a partner who is entitled to Pension Credit, Income Support, income-based JSA, or income-related ESA;
- not be 'receiving education'.

**N.B. claimants who are in education are not excluded from entitlement to income-related ESA if they are receiving Disability Living Allowance (DLA).**

## Tax

Contributory ESA is taxable, income-related ESA is not.

## Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

If you are still officially employed, you get SSP for 28 weeks before you can get ESA. SSP is £79.15 per week but it is taxable. Your employer pays your SSP and this may be included in any contractual sick pay you receive. If your sickness or disability continues for more than 28 weeks, you need to transfer from SSP to ESA. You will need to contact your local Jobcentre Plus to apply for ESA.

## ESA amounts

### Contributory ESA

**13 week assessment phase** – All ESA claims begin with a 13 week assessment phase. During this phase you will be assessed to establish whether you have 'limited capability for work' (see below) and will be paid ESA at the basic rate:

- £64.30 if you are aged 25 or over
- £50.95 if you are aged under 25

### Variants to the 13 week assessment phase:

- if a claimant is terminally ill they will be paid the additional components immediately and not have to wait until the end of the 13 week assessment phase;
- if the ESA claim is linked to a previous ESA claim that had moved into the main phase, then the additional components will be payable immediately on the second claim (for how claims can be linked see '**Linking rules**' below);

- if an ESA claim is linked to a previous ESA claim that had ceased before the assessment phase had ended, then the assessment phase in the new claim will end when the assessment phases together total 13 weeks.

**Example** ESA claim one ends after four weeks. After eight weeks ESA claim two is made. The assessment phase for claim ESA claim two will last 9 weeks ( $4 + 9 = 13$ ).

**The main phase** – During the main phase you will be paid your basic rate plus either:

**£25.50** - the work related activity component; **or**  
**£30.85** - the support component.

### **Note**

Once the assessment phase has ended the basic rate is £64.30 for all claimants whether aged under 25 or over.

In contrast to Incapacity benefit, contributory ESA does not have any age additions, nor any additions for adult dependents.

## **Occupational pensions**

Deductions are made from contributory ESA for occupational pension payments, as follows:

Compare the amount of your occupational pension to the threshold (currently £85 a week). If your pension is less than £85 a week, no deduction will be made from your ESA. If your pension is more than £85 a week, calculate by exactly how much, and then deduct half of this figure from your ESA.

### **Example:**

Mr B is entitled to contributory ESA of £89.80 per week (basic rate of £64.30 plus work-related activity component of £25.50)

He starts receiving an occupational pension of £115 a week

His occupational pension is £30 above the £85 threshold

Half of £30 is £15

$£89.80 - £15 = £74.80$

Mr B's new contributory ESA entitlement is £74.80 per week

## **Income-related ESA**

The rules on applicable amounts, income and capital are set out in the **Employment and Support Allowance Regulations 2008**. The calculation works as follows:

### **Step 1: work out your applicable amount**

Your applicable amount will be made up of the following:

- personal allowance
- premiums (if applicable)
- work-related or support component (after 13 weeks)
- housing Costs (if applicable)

## Personal allowances

These are payable from day one of your claim, and are the same as for contributory ESA:

**£50.95** if you are under 25

**£64.30** if you are 25 or over

Also, as with contributory ESA, the allowance for under 25 year-olds is increased to £64.30 after completion of the 13 week assessment phase.

## Premiums

These are also payable from day one of your claim, and are as follows;

### Severe Disability Premium

This is worth £52.85 a week (one qualifies) or £105.70 a week (two qualify). In order to qualify for this premium you must:

- be in receipt of the middle or higher rate of the DLA care component, or either rate of Attendance Allowance; **and**
- have no adult non-dependent living with you (if you live with a partner, then your partner must also satisfy the DLA/Attendance Allowance qualifying conditions, or be registered blind, otherwise the severe disability premium cannot be paid. If your partner does qualify, then two lots of the severe disability premium can be paid); **and**
- not have anyone claiming Carer's Allowance for looking after you.

The rules on who counts as a non-dependent are complicated, so you should seek advice if you think you may qualify for this premium.

### Enhanced Disability Premium

This is worth £13.40 a week for single claimants and £19.30 a week for claimants who are part of a couple. In order to qualify you must either:

- qualify for the ESA support component; **or**
- be in receipt of the higher rate of the DLA care component.

### Carer Premium

This is worth £29.50 a week. In order to qualify for this, you or your partner must be entitled to Carer's Allowance.

## Pensioner premium

This is payable to some claimants who are aged 60 or over, or who have a partner who is aged 60 or over. There are a number of different rates depending on whether you are claiming as a single person or as part of a couple, and whether you are in the support group or the work-related activity group. You may have the choice of claiming Pension Credit instead. Seek advice from a welfare rights adviser if you think you may qualify.

**Please note – there is no disability premium paid within ESA.**

## Components

These are the same as for contributory ESA. They are only payable after completion of the 13 week assessment phase:

**£25.50** – work-related activity component; or  
**£30.85** – support component.

## Housing costs

If you have a mortgage, you can apply for help with the interest. This will be included in your ESA applicable amount, but will be paid direct to your lender. You can also apply for help with other housing costs such as loans for repairs and improvements.

The rules on what loans are eligible, and how the assistance is calculated, are complicated, so you should seek further advice.

## Step 2: work out your income and capital

### Capital

If you have capital over £16,000 you cannot qualify for income-related ESA.

If you have capital under £6,000, it is ignored in the means-test.

If you have capital between £6,000 and £16,000, for every £250 over £6,000 you are treated as having £1 of income. This is known as 'tariff income'.

### Example:

Mr A has savings of £10,000

This is £4,000 above the lower savings limit

£4,000 divided by £250 = £16

Mr A has tariff income of £16

**If you are one of a couple, your partner's capital will also be taken into account.**

### Income

This includes earnings, pension payments, tariff income from capital, maintenance, student loans, and earnings replacement benefits (contributory ESA and JSA,

Carers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit and others). It does not include means-tested benefits such as Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, nor does it include Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Attendance Allowance.

**If you are one of a couple, your partner's income will also be taken into account.**

### **Step 3: Subtract your income from your applicable amount**

The difference by which your applicable amount exceeds your income will be the amount of income-related ESA that is payable to you.

If your income exceeds your applicable amount then you will not be entitled to income-related ESA. However, if your income exceeds your applicable amount during the assessment phase only, but does not once your support or work-related activity component has been added, then your claim will be treated as 'made from the date' that the relevant component would be payable. This is referred to as '**an advance award**'.

#### **Note**

If your income exceeds your applicable amount but would not once your housing costs have been included, then you can still be treated as entitled to income-related ESA. This is a complex area of law and you should seek further advice.

### **Entitlement to both income-related and contributory ESA amounts**

If you are eligible for both elements of ESA you will receive an amount equal to the greater of the two. If the greater amount is contributory ESA this will make up the whole of the ESA amount paid. If the greater amount is the income-related ESA you will be paid the contributory ESA, topped up with income-related ESA.

#### **Example:**

Mr D is entitled to contributory ESA of £89.80 per week (personal allowance of £64.30 plus work-related activity component of £25.50).

His income-related ESA applicable amount is £142.65 (personal allowance of £64.30 plus work-related activity component of £25.50, plus severe disability premium of £52.85, which he gets because he is in receipt of the middle rate care component of DLA and lives alone).

His applicable amount (£142.65) minus his income (£89.80) = £52.85.

Mr D is entitled to income-related ESA of £52.85 a week.

His total Weekly ESA is therefore his contributory element (£89.80) plus his income-related element (£52.85) = £142.65 per week.

### **The Work Capability Assessment (WCA)**

During the 13 week assessment phase you will be required to undergo the Work Capability Assessment (WCA). This has replaced the Personal Capability

Assessment (PCA) which was used to assess entitlement to Incapacity Benefit and Income Support on the grounds of sickness or disability. Significantly, claimants who are registered severely sight impaired (blind) were automatically exempt from the PCA, but they are not exempt from the WCA.

The WCA has 3 parts:

## 1. The Assessment of Limited Capability for Work (ALCW)

You must have limited capability for work in order to be entitled to ESA. The assessment is based on three forms of evidence:

- a doctor's statement or other medical evidence;
- medical questionnaire (the ESA50);
- any additional information the DWP may request, e.g. a medical assessment by a doctor or a health care professional.

The ALCW is based on a points scoring system. You are assessed according to different areas of physical and mental activity. For each of these areas there is a series of 'descriptors', each of which carries a particular score. On the ESA50 questionnaire, within the relevant areas, you must put a tick next to the descriptor which most accurately applies to you. Not all areas of activity are relevant to all claimants e.g. if your only health problem is your visual impairment, you will only need to complete the section on vision.

In order to pass the test, and be designated as having limited capability for work, you must score a total of 15 points or more from either the physical activities, the mental activities, or both.

### The Vision Section of the ALCW

The assessment is of; vision, including visual acuity and visual fields, in normal daylight or bright electric light, with glasses or other aids to vision if such aid is normally worn.

The new 'descriptors' are as follows:

- |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| (a) Cannot see at all   | - points score 15 |
| (b) Cannot see well enough to read 16 point print at a distance greater than 20cm   | - points score 15 |
| (c) Has 50% or greater reduction of visual fields                                   | - points score 15 |
| (d) Cannot see well enough to recognise a friend at a distance of at least 5 metres | - points score 9  |
| (e) Has 25% reduction or more but less than 50% reduction of visual fields          | - points score 6  |

(f) Cannot see well enough to recognise a friend at a distance of at least 15 meters - points score 6

(g) None of the above apply - points score 0

## Medical examinations

In addition to completing the ESA50 questionnaire it is likely that you will also have to submit to a medical examination as part of the assessment of limited capability for work. Only those claimants who are identified at an early stage as meeting the requirements for membership of the support group are likely to be granted an exemption, and at the time of going to print, this only constituted 2 to 3% of claimants.

The Government has contracted out the task of conducting medical examinations to a private company called ATOS Origin. ATOS employs a variety of health care professionals to perform examinations. The term 'health care professional' is not limited to GPs, and can include other experts such as Community Psychiatric Nurses or Physiotherapists. The health care professionals have been equipped with a software tool which is intended to aid them in conducting the examination.

You must be provided with adequate notice of a medical examination in writing. If having received notice you then fail to attend, or submit to, the examination without good cause (see below), you will automatically be treated as not having limited capability for work.

## 2. The Assessment of Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity (ALCWRA)

This is used to determine which group of claimants you will go into; the **work-related activity group** or the **support group**. It is also based on a system of 'descriptors'. You will 'pass' and be deemed to have limited capability for work-related activity, and therefore placed in the support group, if just one of the 46 'descriptors' applies to you. The 'descriptor' will need to apply for the majority of the time, or on the majority of occasions, and it will be assumed that you are describing your ability when wearing any prosthesis, or using any aid or appliance, which you normally make use of.

### Support Group

Claimants in this group are not expected to carry out any work-related activity; however, they may volunteer to do so if they wish. They are not subject to any conditionality or sanctions of their benefit. It is the Government's stated intention that these claimants should be identified early on during the assessment phase by looking at all required evidence submitted with the initial application. Claimants in the support group are paid the basic allowance plus the support group element and any premiums that are applicable, such as the severe disability premium.

## **Visual Impairment and Membership of the Support Group**

None of the 46 'descriptors' refers specifically to visual impairment. It is therefore very difficult for claimants who are visually impaired to get into the support group, unless they have additional health problems.

## **Work-Related Activity Group**

Claimants in this group must meet certain work-related conditions in order to continue receiving their full ESA. These conditions include:

- taking part in one or more work-focused health related assessments;
- taking part in one or more work-focused interviews and agreeing a 'return to work action plan';
- undertaking work-related activity.

Claimants in this group are paid the basic allowance plus the work-related activity component and any premiums that may apply.

## **Work-Focused Interviews**

The aims of the interview(s) are to:

- assess your prospects for remaining in work or obtaining work;
- encourage you to retain or obtain work;
- identify training, educational or rehabilitation opportunities;
- identify current or future work opportunities relevant to your needs or abilities.

## **Work-Related Activity**

The government reserved itself the power to introduce mandatory work-related activity as part of the Welfare Reform Act 2007. It has not yet exercised this power, as the necessary resources have not been in place. However, from 2010 a number of different schemes will be piloted around the country. It is intended that work-related activity will largely be agreed between you and your personal adviser, but your adviser will have the authority to direct you to take part in a particular activity if s/he thinks it appropriate. If you do not keep to this direction, without good cause, you may eventually be subject to a sanction. Examples of work-related activities may include Work Tasters, job search assistance, improving employability and managing health in work. However the details have not yet been finalised, and will depend on which particular scheme is being piloted in your area.

## **3. The Work-Focused Health Related Assessment**

This assessment is carried out by a health care professional, with the aim of determining:

- additional information about your 'functional capacity' i.e. what work-related tasks you are capable of doing;
- what steps can be taken to improve your capability for work;
- what obstacles or difficulties you may experience as a result of your condition;
- your views on the impact of your condition in relation to work and your work aspirations.

The results of this assessment will be sent as a report to your personal adviser and will be fed into your 'return to work action plan'.

**It is intended that claimants should undergo all 3 parts of the Work Capability Assessment on the same day, at the same venue, and that the total duration will be approximately 75 minutes.**

## Sanctions

If you fail to comply with a work-related condition without 'good cause', it could result in a reduction of the work-related activity component of your ESA: initially a 50% reduction for 4 weeks, then a 100% reduction thereafter. Sanctions will apply until you meet the requirements set out, e.g. by attending a work-focused interview. Once you have complied, your full ESA will be re-instated. Only the work-related activity element can be sanctioned, not the basic ESA. The Government has said there will be safeguards in place so claimants will not be unfairly penalized. These will include regular contact with the claimant, ensuring the claimant's medical condition is considered, and offering home visits.

## Good cause

Following notification that you have breached a requirement, you have a five day grace period in which to either comply or show 'good cause' for your failure to do so. The sanction will only apply at the end of this period, if you are still in breach of the requirement.

Where the breach is a failure to attend a work-focused interview, factors that might constitute 'good cause' include:

- you misunderstood the requirement due to learning, language or literacy difficulties or misleading information from the DWP;
- you had an accident, sudden illness or relapse;
- you had a physical or mental condition that prevented attendance.

Where the breach is a failure to take part in a work-focused health related assessment, factors that might constitute 'good cause' include:

- your state of health at the relevant time;

- the nature of the your disability;
- your location at the time (e.g. whether you were outside Great Britain).

In the case of both the interview and the health assessment there is also a provision for 'any other matter which the Secretary of State considers appropriate' to be considered as 'good cause'. This gives claimants a reasonable degree of scope for justifying a failure to comply. The problem will be showing this 'good cause' within the five day period, particularly if the notification of the breach arrives late.

## Pathways to Work

Pathways to Work is a programme run by Jobcentre Plus to encourage people who are claiming incapacity benefits to consider starting or returning to work. In 40% of the country, the scheme is delivered by Jobcentre Plus, but in the remaining 60% it is delivered by external contractors from the private and voluntary sectors. It is one of the schemes available to people on ESA, and offers access to:

- a range of programmes offering support in preparing to return to work, including NHS Condition Management Programmes, intended to help claimants learn to 'manage' their health condition or disability;
- Work trials, Workstep and Access to Work assistance;
- Job Grant; a one off payment intended to help people coming off benefit to cope financially during their first month of employment. It is tax free and will not reduce any other benefits or Tax Credits you may be entitled to once you start work. There are two rates:

£100 for single claimants and couples without children  
 £250 for couples with children

In order to qualify you must have been claiming ESA for more than 26 weeks, and the job you are taking must be likely to last for more than five weeks. You might also be eligible for a Job Grant if your partner starts working at least 24 hours a week, and as a result your benefit stops.

If you qualify for the Job Grant you will also be eligible for Extended Council Tax Benefit and Extended Housing Benefit. Go to [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) for more information.

- Return to Work Credit; If you come off ESA to take on a job of at least 16 hours a week, but with a gross annual salary of less than £15,000, you can claim a Return to Work Credit of £40 a week, payable for 52 weeks. Your period on ESA must have lasted for more than 13 weeks in order for you to claim this credit. It is tax free and will not reduce any other benefits or Tax Credits you may be entitled to once you start work.

**New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP)** This is another scheme of support for people on incapacity benefits who are looking to return to work. At present it is only available in certain areas. Participants on the scheme are allocated to a job broker, who can assist in a number of ways, including;

- advice and help with filling in application forms, writing CVs and preparing for interviews
- information about local job vacancies
- identifying any training gaps you have, and working with local training providers to get you the training you need
- help with the process of applying for jobs, and support during your first six months in work (including arranging extra support in the workplace e.g. special equipment you may need).

They can also provide financial assistance such as help with the cost of travel to interviews.

If you have problems with your job broker, you do have the option to choose a different one.

**Please note;** from Autumn 2009 the NDDP will be incorporated into the flexible New Deal, a scheme which will be available both to claimants on ESA and to claimants on Jobseekers Allowance.

At present, participation in the support offered by the Pathways and NDDP schemes is not compulsory, but things like the Condition Management Programme are the type of activities which, in time, are likely to be designated as work-related activity, and which could therefore be made mandatory at the discretion of your personal adviser.

## **Permitted Work**

You can do some paid work without losing your entitlement to ESA, providing the work stays within certain limits called the Permitted Work Rules. There are three types of permitted work:

- **Permitted work lower limit**  
You can work and earn up to £20 a week for an indefinite period.
- **Permitted work higher limit**  
You can work and earn up to £93.00 a week, providing your hours remain under 16 a week. Ordinarily this can only be done for a year, unless you are in the support group, in which case there is no time limit.
- **Supported permitted work**  
You can work and earn up to £93.00 a week, with no limit on the number of

hours, providing the work is either done under medical supervision as part of a treatment programme, or is supervised by someone working for an organisation which specialises in arranging work for people with disabilities.

The money you earn doing permitted work is disregarded as income for the purposes of calculating your entitlement to ESA. If you are on income-related ESA, it will also be disregarded for the purposes of calculating your entitlement to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. If you are on contributory ESA only, however, then only the first £20 of your earnings will be disregarded in the calculation for Housing and Council Tax Benefit. It is important therefore that if you are on contributory ESA and are thinking of doing some work, you seek advice from a welfare rights service to check the effect on your other benefits.

## **Voluntary work**

If you do voluntary work you can still claim ESA. There is no limit on the number of hours you can do, but again, you must tell the office that pays your benefit about the work you are doing.

## **Linking rules**

Linking rules help to protect your entitlement to benefit if you stop claiming for a period, for example, because you take on a job, but then find you need to go back on to benefit. If you are able to make use of a linking rule, then you can go back on to benefit at the same rate you were on when you came off, providing there has not been any other change in your circumstances.

It is possible to link periods on ESA in the following circumstances:

- if you reclaim, for whatever reason, within 12 weeks;
- if you reclaim within 104 weeks and meet the definition of a 'work or training beneficiary'. You count as a 'work or training beneficiary' if your previous period of limited capability for work lasted longer than 13 weeks and it ended because you came off ESA to start work or training. In these circumstances you will automatically be treated as having limited capability for work for the first 13 weeks of your new claim. If you were in the support group in your previous claim, you will also automatically go back into the support group. You will however have to undergo the WCA again after the first 13 weeks of your new claim;
- if you reclaim within 104 weeks and the day before reclaiming you were entitled to the disability element of Working Tax Credit.

## **Linking rules for claimants on Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance or Income Support**

If you are currently on Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance or Income Support on the grounds of incapacity for work, and you come off benefit at some

point in the future and then have to reapply, you will be able to make use of any relevant Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance or Income Support linking rule to get back on your old benefit, rather than having to go on to ESA.

The Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support linking rules are very similar to those for ESA. If you are unsure about whether a particular linking rule applies to you, please contact Action for Blind People's welfare rights service for further advice.

## **Employment and Support Allowance and other benefits**

If you are in receipt of income-related ESA you are automatically 'passport'ed to other entitlements including:

- free prescriptions;
- free sight tests and vouchers for glasses;
- free dental treatment;
- Community Care Grants from the Social Fund;
- Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Benefit.

For more information see our fact sheets '**Housing and Council Tax Benefit**', '**Health Benefits**' and '**Community Care Grants**'.

## **Appeals**

You have the right to challenge decisions on limited capability for work and on membership of the support group. In time you may also have the right to appeal a work-related activity direction given by your personal adviser, but this has yet to be decided.

There are two stages to the appeal process:

### **1. Revision**

This is where you ask the DWP to look at the decision again. You have one month from the date of the decision to do this. You can send in additional evidence or information to support your claim.

### **2. Appeal**

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the revision you can appeal to a tribunal. **Again you have one month to do this.** If you wish to appeal a decision, we strongly advise you to seek assistance from an advice agency such as a Citizens Advice Bureau.

## How to claim

To claim ESA you need to phone the Jobcentre Plus claim line on 0800 055 6688. They will normally put you through to your local Jobcentre Plus contact centre, who will complete the claim over the phone, but if you prefer you can ask for a paper claim form (ESA1). Alternatively you can claim online at [www.direct.gov.uk/eservice](http://www.direct.gov.uk/eservice)

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## Further Information

To find out more about Employment and Support Allowance and other benefits, visit [www.direct.gov.uk/disability](http://www.direct.gov.uk/disability) or contact your local advice centre or Citizens Advice Bureau.

Action for Blind People's Welfare Rights Service can also provide advice:

Action for Blind People  
Welfare Rights Service  
14 - 16 Verney Road  
London SE16 3DZ  
National Freephone Helpline: 0800 915 4666  
Email: [benefit.check@actionforblindpeople.org.uk](mailto:benefit.check@actionforblindpeople.org.uk)

You can find all of Action's fact sheets, briefings and checklists on our website at: [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/welfare-rights](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk/welfare-rights)

This is only a brief guide about how blind and partially sighted people and their carers can benefit from Employment and Support Allowance. It is not a complete or exhaustive statement of law.

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**October 2009**

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**National Freephone Helpline: 0800 915 4666**

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