

Work Capability Assessment

What is the Work Capability Assessment? The WCA is what determines your 'capability for work' due to an ill health condition or disability, if you feel your condition/disability prevents you from working.

This assessment is used for both Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

Note: the ESA referred to on this page is new-style contribution based ESA.

Click [here](#) for more information about claiming Universal Credit.

Click [here](#) for more information about claiming ESA.

From the assessment you will have one of the following awarded:

- 'Capable of work': You will be expected to fulfil full work search requirements
- 'Limited Capability for Work'(LCW): You will still have work search requirements but will not have any extra money applied to your award. Click [here](#) for more information about 'work-related requirements'
- 'Limited Capability for Work Related Activity' (LCWRA): You will not be expected to undertake any work related requirements and will get an extra amount as part of your award. (This is sometimes called the 'Support Group')

Note: There are some exceptions where you can be awarded LCW/LCWRA automatically, for example if there it is felt there would be a 'substantial risk' should you be found to have capability for work or limited capability for work. Please click [here](#) for more information about other exceptions.

The form

If you claim Universal Credit, the form will be called 'UC50' and if you claim ns-ESA it will be called an 'ESA85'. Even though the forms have different names, they are exactly the same.

If you claim UC, you will need to ask to be assessed.

If you make a claim for ESA, you will be assessed anyway.

In order to be assessed you will need to request a 'fitnote' from your doctor, you can read more about this [here](#).

It is important to send off evidence with your form if you can. You can read more about the types of evidence to send [here](#).

You are scored against different activities that are designed to assess the impact of your condition or disability on your ability to work or look for work. These will be reflected in the form. You can read more about how to answer the questions [here](#).

You can only score under certain activities if you are suffering with a physical condition and certain ones if you are suffering with symptoms from a mental health or cognitive difficulty. You can read more about the activities [here](#).

To be placed in the LCW group, you must score 15 points or more

To be placed in the LCWRA group, you must score at least one of the top scoring descriptors on certain activities, or if you score on activities 18 or 19. Click [here](#) for more information on these activities. It does not matter how many points you accrue, if you do not hit at least one of the top scoring descriptors, you will not be placed in the LCWRA group.

You will be called for a health assessment after at least 3 months has passed (this may be much after, due to backlogs but if you are awarded, this will be backdated to the relevant date). You can read more about the health assessments [here](#).

Receiving your Decision

If you have received a decision on your WCA and are unhappy about it, the next step is to request a 'Mandatory Reconsideration', where another Decision Maker will look at the decision again. You can request this by phone, in writing or using [this form](#).

Note: If you are being assessed under UC and use the online 'journal' you will be notified on there, not through the post.

Click [here](#) for advice about making a 'Mandatory Reconsideration.'

It is important that you take action within **1 month** of the date on your letter/journal notification. If you are submitting this off past this date, you will need to include a good reason for why it is late.

Please note: If you have been awarded LCW but feel it should be increased to LCWRA, by asking to challenge the DWP decision, there is a risk they can reduce your award as they are obligated to look at your whole entitlement, even if you are only asking them to reconsider one part.

Please note: If you are claiming ESA and you are deemed 'capable of work' your ESA will stop.

Receiving your 'Mandatory Reconsideration Notice':

You will then receive a 'Mandatory Reconsideration Notice' (MRN).

If you are still unhappy with the decision on the MRN, your next step is to lodge an appeal request with Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS). You are asking for an independent tribunal panel to look at your case and make a decision on whether you should be entitled to your benefit. You will be able to choose whether you want this to be face to face, telephone or via video call. You can opt to not attend in any capacity, but this will reduce the chances of your appeal being successful. You can apply for this online or via a written form. Click [here](#) for those options. You will again be asked to outline why you disagree with the decision.

Click [here](#) for advice about making an appeal.

Again, it is important that you take action within **one month** of the date on your MRN and if you are doing this later than that date, you will need to give good reason as to why it is late.

After you have lodged your appeal

The tribunals service will send you a letter confirming your appeal has been lodged and will also include a 'document cover sheet'. It is really important you keep this, as this will have your tribunal reference number and will be needed if you are sending in any extra evidence to the tribunals service.

The DWP will be notified that you have lodged this and can change their minds. If they do not, they will prepare and send to you and HMCTS a 'bundle'. This will be everything the DWP holds on your case, including your original claim form, Assessment report, any evidence submitted as well as any information about previous claims for benefits related to your ill health/disability.

Once your appeal has been lodged, you must now send any extra evidence to the HMCTS, details on how to do this will be on the correspondence you receive for them.

Before your Tribunal Hearing

It is then advisable to prepare a written submission to the tribunal outlining what you think you should be awarded. Click [here](#) for self-help guidance on preparing a submission. To guarantee that the tribunal panel will definitely see any evidence, you must send it in within 2 weeks of your hearing date.

You are normally given around 3 weeks notice of your hearing date. Please note that waiting times for a tribunal hearing may be very long, due to backlogs.

The Tribunal Hearing

Click [here](#) for advice about attending a tribunal hearing in person or for specific information on telephone hearings please click [here](#).

If you are awarded at tribunal, you will not need to notify the DWP, this will be done for you.

Capability for Work award length dates.

If you are awarded LCW under ESA, this means you are only entitled to ESA for 365 days.

Awards of LCWRA can vary in length too so you may be called for reassessment again.

Please note if you receive an award of LCW or LCWRA on your UC, for example and then are able to make a claim for ESA or vice versa, this will carry over to the other award as long as you are still entitled on the day you make a claim.

If you feel your condition has worsened before your award is reviewed.

If you are in receipt of ESA, and were deemed not to have limited capability for work or work related activity, you have to show you have significantly worsened since the decision or now have a new condition that prevents you from working.

If you are in receipt of UC, you cannot ask for a further WCA UNLESS there is evidence to suggest that a decision was made in ignorance of, or based on a mistake OR that there has been a relevant change in circumstances regarding your condition.

If you are in receipt of UC and have been awarded LCW, you can let your workcoach know on your journal.