

Working together for mental health

**Workways**  
Promoting mental health through learning and work.

# TeamWork

News and information for people with learning & work in mind

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## Contents

1. Dates for your Diary & Useful Numbers
- 2 - 3. Reassessment of Sickness-related benefits & Work Capability Assessments
4. Update on the Workways service
- Update on the Workways Support Group
5. Workways Contact details

## Coping with Change

The government's reassessment of sickness-related benefits is bound to cause concern for many people who have a mental health condition.

We devote much of this edition of *TeamWork* to providing information about the changes and the processes involved.

## Useful Numbers

BelInvolved Devon	201218
Connexions	203603
Citizens Advice Bureau	0844 4994101
Council Tax & Housing Benefits	265440
Exeter College	205222
Exeter Volunteer Centre	202055
First Step Project	202055
Jobcentre Plus	473916
MIND Exeter & East Devon	204499
Nextstep	0845 8 50 50 70
New Leaf	823720
Patient Advice & Liaison Services	402093
PLUSS	0800 91 777 92
Recovery & Independent Living	208900
Rethink	01395 224166
St Loye's Foundation	255428
Workways	677050

All prefixed by 01392 unless shown

## Dates for your diary

Places still available for the following training courses and workshops run at Workways:

**Being Mindful** 17 May

**Mental Health Awareness** 29 June

**Benefits Overview** 6 July

**Mental Health First Aid** 12 & 13 October

If you are interested in any of the above or in a session at your premises, please contact us on 01392 677050 or visit

[www.workways.org.uk/training.htm](http://www.workways.org.uk/training.htm)

Read *TeamWork* online at:

[www.workways.org.uk](http://www.workways.org.uk)

## Reassessment of Sickness-related Benefits

As you've probably heard in the media, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) is replacing Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support paid on the grounds of illness or disability. Some people, especially those who have made a new claim in the last couple of years, already receive ESA. This is likely to cause some people a degree of anxiety and having the right information to advise, inform and reassure is important.

*The following information given is not a statement of the law but does include guidance and information provided by Dept for Work & Pensions, Jobcentre Plus & The Tribunals Service and is, to the best of our knowledge, accurate.*

Between now and Spring 2014, Jobcentre Plus will reassess most people on sickness-related benefits, using the Work Capability Assessment, to assess their capability to work.

Those assessed fully capable of work will be invited to make a claim to Jobseeker's Allowance, be able to claim Income Support (if they are entitled under a different condition of entitlement) or will move off benefit. Those who cannot work or have limited capability to work will receive ESA.

- **Firstly**, sometime between now and Spring 2014, claimants will receive a **letter** informing them that changes are about to commence and advising on the next steps.

**People claiming such benefits should make sure that Jobcentre Plus has their correct address and telephone number (including mobiles) – Tel: 0845 603 6095.**

- **Secondly**, they will receive a **telephone call** to give further information, confirm receipt of the letter, and put people at ease by talking through the process, answer any queries and identify if any extra support needed.
- **Thirdly**, they will receive a **medical questionnaire** to fill out – an **ESA50**. The information given on this form will help a healthcare professional from ATOS Healthcare, who do this work for Dept for Work & Pensions (DWP), decide if they need to attend a Work Capability Assessment.

### Work Capability Assessment

#### **Before the assessment**

To prepare for the assessment, the person claiming benefits might want to think about:

- what everyday tasks they have difficulty with, or are unable to do
- if they can do more on some days than others, what a typical day is like for you
- how their illness or disability affects their ability to work
- what support they think they need to improve your ability to work

#### **What happens at the assessment?**

The assessment – which will last around 40 minutes – will involve an interview by an approved healthcare professional from ATOS Healthcare. They may include a physical examination, if it is felt one is needed. The assessment is likely to be different from what you would expect from your own doctor. The assessment is not to diagnose or discuss treatment of a person's illness or disability; it is to assess how it affects them and their ability to work.

People attending have the right to:

- have a friend, relative or support worker with them at the medical assessment
- ask to be assessed by an approved healthcare professional of the same gender

### **At the Work Capability Assessment**

The approved healthcare professional will normally begin by taking a brief history, covering:

- what they did in their old job, if they have had one, and when and why they left
- a brief medical history including details of treatment, medication and any hospital stays
- their domestic situation (who they live with, what type of house they live in and so on)
- how their illness or disability affects how they can perform everyday tasks
- an outline of a typical day

They may also ask about understanding and focus, adapting to change and social interaction.

### **After the assessment**

The approved healthcare professional will complete the report after the medical assessment which will be sent to DWP. The claimant will not normally see it before it is submitted but they can request a copy of the approved healthcare professional's report from DWP.

The report is sent to the person at DWP who is responsible for making a decision on the claim. The decision maker will consider the report along with all the other information provided for their claim and decide whether they are entitled to ESA. If they are entitled, they will also decide whether they should be placed in the Work Related Activity Group or the Support Group.

If the decision is that they are not entitled to ESA then one option is to claim Jobseeker's Allowance which will require signing on at the Jobcentre Plus office once a fortnight and to be available for and actively seeking paid employment.

If the person claiming disagrees with the decision they have a right to appeal. Organisations offering help and advice with an appeal (some may charge) include:

- Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
- trade unions (for existing members)
- solicitors

The CAB may be able help fill in forms and may accompany to the hearing.

More details, links and downloadable information sheets are available at:

[www.workways.org.uk/The%20Maze.htm](http://www.workways.org.uk/The%20Maze.htm)

More information: [www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/esa/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/esa/index.htm)

### **Increasing Benefits Awareness**

Workways offers a half-day session on the current benefits and tax credit system. A session will take place on 6 July – cost just £40 (£30 if a volunteer or unwaged) + VAT.

If you have a number of people interested (minimum 8, maximum 15 participants) we can deliver a course at Workways or at your premises on dates to suit you for £250 + VAT and expenses.

For more information, please contact us on 01392 677050 or visit

[www.workways.org.uk/training.htm](http://www.workways.org.uk/training.htm)

## **Update on the Workways Service**

In recent months we have working hard on a redesign of our service to provide a clearer focus on the type of help we provide to people living in Exeter, East and Mid-Devon who have a mental health condition that affects their ability to find or stay in work or learning. As a result, and thanks to some funding from Dept of Health, we have expanded our service to be time-unlimited to people living in Mid-Devon (previously we could only offer a one-offer appointment).

Workways specialises in:

- **Job retention** – helping people who are in paid employment and who need specialised support to either retain that employment or to move into alternative employment in a planned and positive way with the aim of supporting their mental health as well as their employment situation.
- **Finding paid work** – helping people currently actively seeking paid employment of any number of hours.
- **Sustaining learning** – helping people doing a course who need specialised support to retain their place at college or university or with a training organisation.
- **Working towards work** – helping people who have the intention of finding paid work at some point in the future but who need time to explore their options and possibly try voluntary work &/or learning as part of their route to finding paid work.

**If someone is looking to do voluntary work or learn new skills – but not wanting paid work**, they can contact us on 01392 677050 and we can give them information about who else can help.

Supporting employers remains a key part of what we do both locally and, through MINDFUL EMPLOYER, ([www.mindfulemployer.net](http://www.mindfulemployer.net)) UK-wide.

## **Workways Support Groups**

Anyone who is using, or has used, the Workways service is welcome to attend these group. The Exeter group meets at Workways on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month, 11-1pm.

Latest News: The Support Group in Exmouth has now been up and running since January 2011 and is held at Alexandra House in Exmouth every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month, 11-1pm.

If you would like any further information about the Support Group then contact Becky, Sam or Matt at Workways on 01392 677050.

If you have any ideas or feedback regarding Teamwork, please get in touch:

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Fax: 01392 677079

Email: [info@workways.org.uk](mailto:info@workways.org.uk)

## **Advertise in Teamwork**

Do you provide information, advice, training or support to people with mental health issues, employers or learning and work organisations?

You can advertise your service to our readership of over 2,000 learning and work organisations, employers, social care and health professionals and also on the Internet.

An advert costs just £40 + VAT per edition.