

## **A guide to Employment and Support Allowance – The Work Capability Assessment**

This guide gives detailed information about the ‘Work Capability Assessment’ element of Employment and Support Allowance. It is aimed mainly at professionals and contractors, but can also be read by customers. Because of the detailed nature of this guide, it is more complicated than the main information leaflets produced by Jobcentre Plus and some words or phrases may be unfamiliar.

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## Terminology

**Approved Healthcare Professional:** A healthcare professional (doctor or nurse), who has been approved by the Department for Work and Pensions' Chief Medical Adviser.

**Decision maker:** The person who decides if a customer is entitled to benefit on behalf of the Secretary of State.

**Disability:** Limitation of ability in each activity area.

**Work Capability Assessment:** The medical assessment process to determine if a person is considered as having limited capability for work.

**Personal adviser:** A trained adviser who will give the customer help and advice with identifying realistic job goals and any additional support that may be required. The adviser may work for Jobcentre Plus or for a private provider eg an organisation contracted by Jobcentre Plus to deliver this part of the service.

**Limited capability for work:** The extent to which a customer's health condition or disability affects their capability for work.

**Limited capability for work-related activity:** The extent to which a customer's health condition or disability affects their capability for work-related activity.

**Work-focused health-related assessment:** a discussion between the customer and the healthcare professional to identify potential barriers to work and any relevant health-related interventions – providing a report to the customer's personal adviser.

**Work-Related Activity Group:** Customers identified for this group will take part in work-focused interviews with a personal adviser, and have access to a range of support to help them prepare for suitable work.

**Support Group:** If the effects of a customer's health condition or disability are so severe that it would be unreasonable to expect them to prepare for work, they will join the Support Group. These customers will receive the higher rate of Employment and Support Allowance and do not have to take part in any work-related activity as a condition of receiving benefit (although they can volunteer to do so).

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### **Introduction**

The Work Capability Assessment is the medical assessment process for customers claiming Employment and Support Allowance. It identifies how a customer's health condition or disability affects their ability to work and plays an important role in determining entitlement to benefit.

For entitlement to exist, customers must be found to have limited capability for work which means that their current health condition or disability restricts their ability to work.

The Work Capability Assessment has three components:

- 1) Limited Capability for Work  
Assessment to help determine benefit entitlement based on the extent to which a customer's health condition or disability affects their capability for work
- 2) Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity  
Assessment to determine whether the customer can be placed into the Support Group because the effect of their condition is so severe that it would be unreasonable to expect them to engage in work-related activity.
- 3) Work-focused health-related assessment  
Interview with the healthcare professional who will ask a customer how they feel their health condition or disability is stopping them from working, and what help they may need to start work. The report will provide advice to a personal adviser about potential barriers to work and any relevant health-related interventions identified

This leaflet sets out in detail how each of the above components of the assessment operates in practice.

Medical Services for Jobcentre Plus are contracted to a private company. This company supplies the approved healthcare professionals who will provide a Jobcentre Plus decision maker with an independent medical opinion on how a customer's health condition or disability affects their ability to undertake work.

**Jobcentre Plus is an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions.**

### **Medical quality – the approval process**

An approval process, which has been agreed by the Department for Work and Pensions' Chief Medical Adviser, helps to make sure that:

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- approved healthcare professionals work to a consistently high standard throughout the country, and
- customers get a thorough and objective assessment of how their health condition or disability affects their ability to carry out the activities in the Work Capability Assessment.

### **Jobcentre Plus professional standards**

These professional standards cover the conduct we expect from healthcare professionals working on our behalf.

This means that the approved healthcare professional will:

- make customers feel welcome and at ease
- introduce 'themselves' and wear a name badge
- describe the purpose and nature of the medical assessment
- encourage customers to bring a friend or relative to the medical assessment if they want to
- allow the customer enough time to talk about their medical condition
- carry out the examination gently to avoid any unnecessary discomfort to the customer, and
- answer any reasonable questions

Complaints about the way examinations are carried out are considered by Medical Services. Full details about complaints procedures are available to customers when they attend examinations.

### **How the approval process works**

The approval process includes a formal assessment of the healthcare professional's

- skills
- knowledge, and
- attitude to customers

The approval process helps to make sure that all approved healthcare professionals can produce satisfactory reports on a patient's medical condition to the professional and medical quality standards expected by Jobcentre Plus. Continued approval by the Secretary of State depends on the healthcare professional's on-going satisfactory performance and continued attendance at future professional educational events.

The approval process is divided into four stages, followed by a consolidation process.

#### **Stage 1 – The prescribed training course**

This is a prescribed training course made up of at least three days classroom training including:

- customer service training
- analysing videotape interviews with customers
- looking at examples of casework

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- practice in completing Employment and Support Allowance medical reports for the Work Capability Assessment, and
- an emphasis on assessing the mental health of the customer

### **Stage 2 – The written assessment of medical knowledge**

This consists of a written test paper which has to be completed to a satisfactory standard.

### **Stage 3 – Supervised practical training and appraisal**

In this stage the healthcare professional carries out assessments under the supervision of an experienced trainer. The emphasis is on:

- customer service
- medical assessment techniques, and
- report completion skills

The healthcare professionals are provisionally approved to carry out unsupervised medical assessments once they have successfully completed the first three stages of the approval process.

### **Stage 4 – Appraisal of casework**

During the period of provisional approval, the healthcare professional's trainer will assess all reports completed by the healthcare professional until his or her competence is assured. This will include at least one report on a customer with mental health problems.

### **Maintenance of approval**

Maintenance of the healthcare professional's approval is dependent upon the healthcare professional continuing to satisfy the required quality standards.

### **Validating medical quality**

The Chief Medical Adviser to the Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for validating all medical quality processes on behalf of Jobcentre Plus.

## **The Work Capability Assessment**

The Work Capability Assessment should be applied to all customers within the first 13 weeks of claiming Employment and Support Allowance. It will assess, for the purposes of determining entitlement, whether a customer can be considered to have

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limited capability for work. It will also help determine the rate at which Employment and Support Allowance is awarded from Week 14, when the main phase is applied.

To determine whether limited capability for work exists, the Work Capability Assessment will look at the effects of any health condition or disability on a customer's ability to carry out a range of everyday activities.

This will involve the following:

- **activities** – for example walking, sitting, standing, memory and concentration which are relevant to work
- **descriptors** – lists a range of actions within each activity, which customers may be able to perform. Where more than one descriptor for any activity applies, only the highest score will count
- **a score, or set of scores** – each descriptor that is relevant to a customer's health condition or disability has a relevant points weighting, called a 'score'
- **exceptional circumstances (non-functional descriptors)** – conditions where although customers could carry out the activities in the Work Capability Assessment, they would be treated as having limited capability for work

The outcome of the Work Capability Assessment determines if a customer has limited capability for work.

For customers with limited capability for work, most will be placed in the Work-Related Activity Group. Those customers that meet one of the limited capability for work-related activity descriptors outlined later in this guide, will be placed in the Support Group.

If a customer does not have limited capability for work, they will be provided with advice about registering for employment and claiming other benefits.

### Activities

The activities relevant to the physical assessment:

- Walking with a walking stick or other aid if such aid is normally used

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- Standing and sitting
- Bending or kneeling
- Reaching
- Picking up and moving or transferring by the use of the upper body and arms
- Manual dexterity
- Speech
- Hearing with a hearing aid or other aid if normally worn
- Vision including visual activity and visual fields, in normal daylight or bright electric light, with glasses or other aid to vision if such aid is normally worn
- Continence
- Remaining conscious during waking moments

The activities relevant to the mental, cognitive and intellectual function assessment:

- Learning or comprehension in the completion of tasks
- Awareness of hazards
- Memory and concentration
- Execution of tasks
- Initiating and sustaining personal action
- Coping with change
- Getting about
- Coping with social situations
- Propriety of behaviour with other people
- Dealing with other people

To describe what is meant by activities, the descriptors within each activity and associated scores can be found later in this guide, but as an example, within the activity 'Walking with a stick or other aid if such aid is normally used' there are six descriptors:

- a) Cannot walk at all
- b) Cannot walk more than 50 metres on level ground without repeatedly stopping or severe discomfort
- c) Cannot walk up or down two steps even with the support of a handrail
- d) Cannot walk more than 100 metres on level ground without stopping or severe discomfort
- e) Cannot walk more than 200 metres on level ground without stopping or severe discomfort
- f) None of the above applies

Within each activity, the descriptors cover a range of ability.

### **Combinations of disabilities**

Many people may suffer with more than one disability. The assessment therefore includes a means of assessing the combined effects of different disabilities.



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For example, if a customer could walk 50 metres or more but could not walk 200 metres without stopping or severe discomfort, this by itself would score 6. However, if they also had difficulties with 'Manual dexterity' such as cannot physically use a pen or pencil, this would score an additional 9. If a customer is awarded a score of 15 or more, they will be entitled to Employment and Support Allowance and considered as having limited capability for work.

### **Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity**

There are also a further eleven activities which are considered to determine if a customer has 'limited capability for work-related activity'. The approved healthcare professional will provide advice if at least one of the descriptors for any activity applies to the customer. This will determine the customer's entitlement to the 'Support' component. The activities are set out in full at pages 27 to 30.

### **Exceptional circumstances (Non-functional descriptors)**

There are a small number of cases where the customer could carry out all the activities in the assessment, but would still qualify for Employment and Support Allowance.

The circumstances when this would apply are:

- A customer is suffering from a severe life threatening disease in relation to which –
  - i) there is medical evidence that the disease is uncontrollable, or uncontrolled, by a recognised therapeutic procedure, and
  - ii) in the case of a disease that is uncontrolled, there is a reasonable cause for it not to be controlled by a recognised therapeutic procedure
- A customer is suffering some specific disease or bodily or mental disablement and, by reasons of such disease or disablement, there would be a substantial risk to the mental or physical health of any person if the customer were found not to have limited capability for work

The evidence available to the decision maker will include advice from the approved healthcare professional.

### **Special Rules**

There are circumstances in which a person will be treated as having limited capability for work, even though they would not score 15 points in the assessment. Where possible, Jobcentre Plus will try to identify such customers without the need for a

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medical examination. Customers would be treated as having limited capability for work in the following instances:

- terminally ill, defined as having a progressive health condition, as a result of which death can be reasonably expected within 6 months
- receiving treatment by way of intravenous, intraperitoneal or intrathecal chemotherapy or
- recovering from that treatment and the Secretary of State is satisfied the customer should be treated as having limited capability for work
- is excluded or abstains from work, or from work of such kind, pursuant to a request or notice in writing lawfully made under an enactment; or otherwise prevented from working pursuant to an enactment, by reason of the customer being a carrier, or having been in contact with a case, of a relevant disease
- for a pregnant woman, there is a serious risk of damage to her health or to the health of her unborn child if she does not refrain from work.
- for a pregnant woman, she is within the maternity allowance period; and is entitled to a maternity allowance under Section 35(1) of the Contributions and Benefits Act(81)
- a pregnant woman whose expected or actual date of confinement has been certified in accordance with the Social Security (Medical Evidence) Regulations 1976, on any day in the period –
  - i) beginning with the first date of the 6<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of her confinement or the actual date of her confinement, whichever is the earlier; and
  - ii) ending on the 14<sup>th</sup> day after the actual date of her confinement if she would have no entitlement to a maternity allowance or statutory maternity pay were she to make a claim in respect of that period
- receiving regular weekly treatment by way of haemodialysis for chronic renal failure; treatment by way of plasmapheresis or by way of radiotherapy; or regular weekly treatment by way of total parenteral nutrition for gross impairment of enteric function, is to be treated as having limited capability for work during any week in which that customer is engaged in that treatment or has a day of recovery from that treatment

There are also further circumstances in which a person will be treated as having limited capability for work-related activity, even though they would not score 15 points in the assessment. Customers would be treated as having limited capability for work-related activity in the following instances:

- terminally ill, defined as having a progressive health condition, as a result of which death can be reasonably expected within 6 months
- receiving treatment by way of intravenous, intraperitoneal or intrathecal chemotherapy, or
- recovering from that treatment and the Secretary of State is satisfied the customer should be treated as having limited capability for work-related activity
- for a pregnant woman, there is a serious risk of damage to her health or to the health of her unborn child if she does not refrain from work

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- suffers from some specific disease or bodily or mental disablement and by reasons of such disease or disablement, there would be a substantial risk to the mental or physical health of any person if the customer were found not to have limited capability for work-related activity

**Application of the Work Capability Assessment**

This section describes the procedures for applying the assessment to the majority of claims.

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### Questionnaire

It is expected that the Work Capability Assessment will be completed within the first 13 weeks of the Employment and Support Allowance claim.

The basic rate of Employment and Support Allowance will be paid during the first 13 weeks (known as the 'Assessment phase'). During this time, the Work Capability Assessment will be undertaken which will determine the rate received from Week 14, i.e. whether the customer will be placed into the Work-Related Activity Group or the Support Group (known as the 'Main phase').

When the Work Capability Assessment is applied, Jobcentre Plus staff will attempt to identify those customers who are not required to complete the information gathering stages of the assessment – see 'Special Rules' within this guide.

The questionnaire will seek the customer's views on the effects of their disabling condition in each of the functional areas in the assessment. The customer will be asked to identify (by a tick in a box) the descriptor in each affected area which best describes the effect of their disabling condition, and to give any further information that they think should be taken into account. It also gives the customer the opportunity to provide information on any special needs they may have. For example, the customer may require an interpreter at their examination.

The customer will then return the questionnaire to Medical Services. Given the wide variability of effects of disabling conditions between individuals, the majority of cases, except those with the most severe levels of disability, will be referred for a face to face medical assessment from an approved healthcare professional.

In the case of people with the most severe levels of disability, the approved healthcare professional will consider all the available evidence on the claim and they may form a view that they can give advice to the decision maker on the basis of that evidence.

The approved healthcare professional may consider that further information from the customer's doctor or other appropriate source is required and/or that the customer should be medically examined. **No customer will be found not to have limited capability for work without either having a medical examination or having been offered one.**

### The medical assessment

An assessment does not always mean that the approved healthcare professional will undertake a physical examination. They may just want to talk to the customer about

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how their health condition or disability affects their everyday activities. The customer will have an opportunity to give any other information relevant to their assessment.

The approved healthcare professional will consider all the information and exercise clinical judgement to reach an opinion on the nature and severity of the effects of the disabling condition. They will also take full account of factors such as pain, fatigue, stress and of the possible variability of the condition. For example, if the customer can perform a particular activity only by incurring a considerable degree of pain, they will be classed as being incapable of performing that activity. The approved healthcare professional will also consider the effects of the condition on the customer for the majority of the time, so that the opinion will not be based on a snapshot of their condition on the day of the medical assessment.

The approved healthcare professional's task of considering the effects of a condition is different from that of a GP needing to make a diagnosis and plan treatment. The interview and assessment may therefore be different from that which the customer might expect from their GP.

The approved healthcare professional provides advice to the benefit decision maker for each activity area. They will also provide a full explanation for their advice particularly where the opinion is different from the customer's own perception of their functional limitations.

The approved healthcare professional will also provide advice to the decision maker on whether any of the Exceptional Circumstances (non-functional descriptors) apply.

Medical Services will try, where possible, to provide a same sex healthcare professional should the customer request one. The customer can make arrangements for a relative or friend to be present during the assessment.

When the approved healthcare professional decides that the customer should be medically assessed it is important that they keep the appointment and attend the assessment. The customer's entitlement to benefit may be affected if they miss the appointment for no good reason. If the customer cannot attend the assessment, they should contact Medical Services beforehand to arrange another date.

### **Work-focused health-related assessment**

The aim of the 'work-focused health-related assessment' is to provide the customer's personal adviser with a report highlighting the customer's perceptions about work and barriers to work, and any appropriate health related interventions identified.

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Customers who are eligible for the Support Group will not need to undertake the work-focused health-related assessment.

The work-focused health-related assessment:

- is arranged on the same day by the same healthcare professional after the medical assessment has been conducted
- allows Medical Services to provide the Work Focused Health Related Assessment report direct to the relevant personal adviser and a copy is sent to the customer as well. The customer will be encouraged to share this report with their own Doctor
- is not seen by Jobcentre Plus decision makers, so therefore plays no part in determining a customer's entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance
- is a mandatory part of the Work Capability Assessment

### **How assessments are decided**

#### **Principles of decision making**

Benefit decisions are made by decision makers who are suitably trained and experienced to do so. The decision maker must make a decision by considering all the evidence and applying the law to the facts of each claim. Their judgement must be reasonable and made with unbiased discretion.

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### **The role of the decision maker**

As with other social security benefits, the decision on entitlement to Employment and Support Allowance will be taken by a decision maker, who will consider carefully all the evidence. This will include the completed customer questionnaire, the information provided by their doctor and the advice of the approved healthcare professional.

If the customer scores 15 points in any physical and/ or mental activity or a total of 15 or more points from a combination of activities, then the criterion for limited capability for work is met for benefit entitlement purposes. At this stage the decision maker will also consider whether a customer is to be placed into the Support Group, if the advice from the approved healthcare professional indicates one of the criteria for limited capability for work-related activity has been met.

If the score is below 15 points, the customer will not have limited capability for work and therefore not be entitled to Employment and Support Allowance.

However, before this decision is confirmed, consideration will be given by the decision maker to all available medical evidence. If other medical evidence is considered, and confirms that one or more descriptors apply, totalling at least 15 points, then the criteria for limited capability for work will be met for benefit entitlement purposes.

The customer's own doctor will be required to give an opinion on fitness for work, on a Med 3 medical certificate of incapacity, prior to the application of the Work Capability Assessment. This opinion will be considered by the decision maker along with all the other evidence. Following the Work Capability Assessment, the customer's own doctor will be advised that they are no longer required to issue any further certificates during their claim. The decision maker will also consider any evidence of a significant change in the customer's medical condition.

### **Information about the decision**

The decision maker will notify the customer whether they are entitled to Employment and Support Allowance or not.

If the customer does not qualify for Employment and Support Allowance, they will also be provided with advice about registering for employment and claiming other benefits.

### **If the customer thinks the decision is wrong**

The customer needs to get in touch with Jobcentre Plus within one month of the date of the decision letter. If contact is made later, then we may not be able to help.

The customer, or someone else who has the authority to act on their behalf, can:

- ask us to explain our decision
- ask us to write to the customer with the reasons for our decision
- ask us to look at our decision again (the customer may think we have overlooked some facts or they may have more information to give us which affects our decision), or
- appeal against our decision to an independent tribunal (but this must be in writing)

The customer can do any of the actions listed above, or they can do all of them.

To contact us visit [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk) or see our entry in the phone book.

### **Reporting changes of circumstances**

While the customer is receiving Employment and Support Allowance they must tell us straight away if any of their circumstances change. If the customer is not sure if we need to know something, they should tell us anyway. When the customer gets in touch with us, they must tell us their full name and National Insurance number.

### **If the customer's condition changes**

The customer must tell us straight away if their medical condition changes. Their condition may:



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- get better
- get worse, or
- change to another condition

This could be because of:

- surgery
- using aids or appliances, or
- a change in medication

The customer must tell us straight away if this happens, because we may have to look at their claim again. We may ask them to fill in a questionnaire and to have another medical assessment.

### **Future Work Capability Assessments**

The Work Capability Assessment will continue to be applied at regular intervals during the life of a claim to ensure the conditions for entitlement are maintained.

The timing of further assessments is determined by the Jobcentre Plus decision maker. To assist the decision maker, the approved healthcare professional includes advice on the medical report about when it is likely the customer will be able to return to work. However, the assessment can be applied sooner if the decision maker considers there has been a significant change in the customer's health condition or disability.

## Limited Capability for Work

### Descriptors and scores for each physical activity

#### Activities

#### 1. Walking with a walking stick or other aid if such aid is normally used

Descriptor	Points
a) Cannot walk at all	15
b) Cannot walk more than 50 metres on level ground without repeatedly stopping or severe discomfort	15
c) Cannot walk up or down two steps even with the support of a handrail	15
d) Cannot walk more than 100 metres on level ground without stopping or severe discomfort	9
e) Cannot walk more than 200 metres on level ground without stopping or severe discomfort	6
f) None of the above apply	0

#### 2. Standing and sitting

Descriptor	Points
a) Cannot stand for more than 10 minutes, unassisted by another person, even if free to move around, before needing to sit down	15
b) Cannot sit in a chair with a high back and no arms for more than 10 minutes before needing to move from the chair because the degree of discomfort experienced makes it impossible to continue sitting	15
c) Cannot rise to standing from sitting in an upright chair without physical assistance from another person	15
d) Cannot move between one seated position and another seated position located next to one another without receiving physical assistance from another person	15
e) Cannot stand for more than 30 minutes, even if free to move around, before needing to sit down	6
f) Cannot sit in a chair with a high back and no arms for more than 30 minutes without needing to move from the chair because the degree of discomfort experienced makes it impossible to continue sitting	6
g) None of the above apply	0

#### 3. Bending or kneeling

Descriptor	Points
a) Cannot bend to touch knees and straighten up again	15
b) Cannot bend, kneel or squat, as if to pick up a light object, such as a piece of paper, situated 15cm from the floor on a low shelf, to move it and straighten up again without the help of another person	9
c) Cannot bend, kneel or squat, as if to pick up a light object off the floor and straighten up again without the help of another person	6

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- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| d) None of the above apply | 0 |
|----------------------------|---|

#### 4. Reaching

Descriptor	Points
a) Cannot raise either arm as if to put something in top pocket of a coat or jacket	15
b) Cannot put either arm behind back as if to put on a coat or jacket	15
c) Cannot raise either arm to top of head as if to put on a hat	9
d) Cannot raise either arm above head height as if to reach for something	6
e) None of the above apply	0

#### 5. Picking up and moving or transferring by the use of the upper body and arms (excluding all other activities specified)

Descriptor	Points
a) Cannot pick up and move a 0.5 litre carton full of liquid with either hand	15
b) Cannot pick up and move a one litre carton full of liquid with either hand	9
c) Cannot pick up and move a light but bulky object such as an empty cardboard box, requiring the use of both hands together	6
d) None of the above apply	0

#### 6. Manual dexterity

Descriptor	Points
a) Cannot turn a 'star-headed' sink tap with either hand	15
b) Cannot pick up a £1 coin or equivalent with either hand	15
c) Cannot turn the pages of a book with either hand	15
d) Cannot physically use a pen or pencil	9
e) Cannot physically use a conventional keyboard or mouse	9
f) Cannot do up/ undo small buttons, such as shirt or blouse buttons	9
g) Cannot turn a 'star-headed' sink tap with one hand but can with the other	6
h) Cannot pick up a £1 coin or equivalent with one hand but can with the other	6
i) Cannot pour from an open 0.5 litre carton full of liquid	6
j) None of the above apply	0

#### 7. Speech

Descriptor	Points
a) Cannot speak at all	15
b) Speech cannot be understood by strangers	15
c) Strangers have great difficulty understanding speech	9
d) Strangers have some difficulty understanding speech	6
e) None of the above apply	0

### 8. Hearing with a hearing aid or other aid if normally worn

Descriptor	Points
a) Cannot hear at all	15
b) Cannot hear well enough to be able to hear someone talking in a loud voice in a quiet room, sufficiently clearly to distinguish the words being spoken	15
c) Cannot hear someone talking in a normal voice in a quiet room, sufficiently clearly to distinguish the words being spoken	9
d) Cannot hear someone talking in a loud voice in a busy street, sufficiently clearly to distinguish the words being spoken	6
e) None of the above apply	0

### 9. Vision including visual activity and visual fields, in normal daylight or bright electric light, with glasses or other aid to vision if such aid is normally worn

Descriptor	Points
a) Cannot see at all	15
b) Cannot see well enough to read 16 point print at a distance of greater than 20 cm	15
c) Has 50% or greater reduction of visual fields	15
d) Cannot see well enough to recognise a friend at a distance of at least 5 metres	9
e) Has 25% or more but less than 50% reduction of visual fields	6
f) Cannot see well enough to recognise a friend at a distance of at least 15 metres	6
g) None of the above apply	0

### 10 (a) Continence other than enuresis (bed wetting) where the customer does not have an artificial stoma or urinary collecting device

Descriptor	Points
a)(i) Has no voluntary control over the evacuation of the bowel	15
a)(ii) Has no voluntary control over the voiding of the bladder	15
a)(iii) At least once a month loses control of bowels so that the customer cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel	15
a)(iv) At least once a week, loses control of bladder so that the customer cannot control the full voiding of the bladder	15
a)(v) Occasionally loses control of bowels so that the customer cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel	9
a)(vi) At least once a month loses control of bladder so that the customer cannot control the full voiding of the bladder	6
a)(vii) Risks losing control of bowels or bladder so that the customer cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel or the full voiding of the bladder if not able to reach a toilet quickly	6
a)(viii) None of the above apply	0

**10 (b) Continence where the customer uses a urinary collecting device, worn for the majority of the time including an indwelling urethral or suprapubic catheter**

<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Points</b>
b)(i) Is unable to affix, remove or empty the catheter bag or other device without receiving physical assistance from another person	15
b)(ii) Is unable to affix, remove or empty the catheter bag or other collecting device without causing leakage of contents	15
b)(iii) Has no voluntary control over the evacuation of the bowel	15
b)(iv) At least once a month, loses control of bowels so that the customer cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel	15
b)(v) Occasionally loses control of bowels so that the customer cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel	9
b)(vi) Risks losing control of the bowels so that the customer cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel if not able to reach a toilet quickly	6
b)(vii) None of the above apply	0

**10 (c) Continence other than enuresis (bed wetting) where the customer has an artificial stoma**

<b>Descriptor</b>	<b>Points</b>
c)(i) Is unable to affix, remove or empty stoma appliance without receiving physical assistance from another person	15
c)(ii) Is unable to affix, remove or empty stoma appliance without causing leakage of contents	15
c)(iii) Where the customer's artificial stoma relates solely to the evacuation of the bowel, at least once a week, loses control of bladder so that the customer cannot control the full voiding of the bladder	15
c)(iv) Where the customer's artificial stoma relates solely to the evacuation of the bowel, at least once a month, loses control of bladder so that the customer cannot control the full voiding of bladder	9
c)(v) Where the customer's artificial stoma relates solely to the evacuation of the bowel, risks losing control of the bladder so that the customer cannot control the full voiding of the bladder if not able to reach a toilet quickly	6
c)(vi) None of the above apply	0

**11. Remaining conscious during waking moments**

<b>Descriptors</b>	<b>Points</b>
a) At least once a week, has an involuntary episode of lost or altered consciousness, resulting in significantly disrupted awareness or concentration	15
b) At least once a month, has an involuntary episode of lost or altered consciousness, resulting in significantly disrupted awareness or concentration	9
c) At least twice in six months immediately preceding the assessment, has had an involuntary episode of lost or altered consciousness,	6

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resulting in significantly disrupted awareness or concentration  
d) None of the above apply

0

**Descriptors and scores for each mental, cognitive and intellectual function assessment**

**12. Learning or comprehension in completion of tasks**

<b>Descriptors</b>	<b>Points</b>
a) Cannot learn or understand how to successfully complete a simple task, such as setting an alarm clock, at all	15
b) Needs to witness a demonstration, given more than once on the same occasion, of how to carry out a simple task before the customer is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a further demonstration of how to complete it	15
c) Needs to witness a demonstration of how to carry out a simple task, before the customer is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a verbal prompt from another person	9
d) Needs to witness a demonstration of how to carry out a moderately complex task, such as the steps involved in operating a washing machine to correctly clean clothes, before the customer is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a verbal prompt from another person	9
e) Needs verbal instructions as to how to carry out a simple task before the customer is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable, within a period of less than one week, to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a verbal prompt from another person	6
f) None of the above apply	0

**13. Awareness of hazards**

<b>Descriptors</b>	<b>Points</b>
a) Reduced awareness of the risks of everyday hazards (such as boiling water or sharp objects) would lead to daily instances of or to near-avoidance of: (i) injury to self or others; or (ii) significant damage to property or possessions, to such an extent that overall day to day life cannot successfully be managed	15
b) Reduced awareness of the risks of everyday hazards would lead for the majority of the time to instances of or to near-avoidance of: (i) injury to self and others; or (ii) significant damage to property or possessions, to such an extent that overall day to day life cannot successfully be managed without supervision from another person	9

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| c) Reduced awareness of the risks of everyday hazards has led or would lead to frequent instances of or to near-avoidance of: | 6 |
| (i) injury to self or others; or  |   |
| (ii) significant damage to property or possessions,   |   |
| but not to such an extent that overall day to day life cannot be managed when such incidents occur                            |   |
| d) None of the above apply  | 0 |

#### 14. Memory and concentration

Descriptors	Points
a) On a daily basis, forgets or loses concentration to such an extent that overall day to day life cannot be successfully managed without receiving verbal prompting, given by someone else in the customer's presence	15
b) For the majority of the time, forgets or loses concentration to such an extent that overall day to day life cannot be successfully managed without receiving verbal prompting, given by someone else in the customer's presence	9
c) Frequently forgets or loses concentration to such an extent that overall day to day life can only be successfully managed with pre-planning, such as making a daily written list of all tasks forming part of daily life that are to be completed	6
d) None of the above apply	0

#### 15. Execution of tasks

Descriptors	Points
a) Is unable to successfully complete any everyday task	15
b) Takes more than twice the length of time it would take a person without any form of mental disablement, to successfully complete an everyday task with which the customer is familiar	15
c) Takes more than one and a half times but no more than twice the length of time it would take a person without any form of mental disablement to successfully complete an everyday task with which the customer is familiar	9
d) Takes one and a half times the length of time it would take a person without any form of mental disablement to successfully complete an everyday task with which the customer is familiar	6
e) None of the above apply	0

#### 16. Initiating and sustaining personal action

Descriptors	Points
a) Cannot, due to cognitive impairment or a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, initiate or sustain any personal action (which means planning, organisation, problem solving, prioritising or switching tasks)	15
b) Cannot, due to cognitive impairment or a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, initiate or sustain personal action without requiring verbal prompting given by another person in the customer's presence	15

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for the majority of the time	
c) Cannot, due to cognitive impairment or a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, initiate or sustain personal action without requiring verbal prompting given by another person in the customer's presence for the majority of the time	9
d) Cannot, due to cognitive impairment or a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, initiate or sustain personal action without requiring frequent verbal prompting given by another person in the customer's presence	6
e) None of the above apply	0

### 17. Coping with change

Descriptors	Points
a) Cannot cope with very minor, expected changes in routine, to the extent that overall day to day life cannot be managed	15
b) Cannot cope with expected changes in routine (such as a pre-arranged permanent change to the routine time scheduled for a lunch break), to the extent that overall day to day life is made significantly more difficult	9
c) Cannot cope with minor, unforeseen changes in routine (such as an unexpected change of the timing of an appointment on the day it is due to occur), to the extent that overall, day to day life is made significantly more difficult	6
d) None of the above apply	0

### 18. Getting about

Descriptors	Points
a) Cannot get to any specified place with which the customer is, or would be, familiar	15
b) Is unable to get to a specified place with which the customer is familiar, without being accompanied by another person on each occasion	15
c) For the majority of the time is unable to get to a specified place with which the customer is familiar without being accompanied by another person	9
d) Is frequently unable to get to a specified place with which the customer is familiar without being accompanied by another person	6
e) None of the above apply	0

### 19. Coping with social situations

Descriptors	Points
a) Normal activities, for example, visiting new places or engaging in social contact, are precluded because of overwhelming fear or anxiety	15
b) Normal activities, for example, visiting new places or engaging in social contact, are precluded for the majority of the time due to overwhelming fear or anxiety	9
c) Normal activities, for example, visiting new places or engaging in	6



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social contact, are frequently precluded, due to overwhelming fear or anxiety	
d) None of the above apply	0

## 20. Propriety of behaviour with other people

Descriptors	Points
a) Has unpredictable outbursts of aggressive, disinhibited, or bizarre behaviour, being either: (i) sufficient to cause disruption to others on a daily basis; or (ii) of such severity that although occurring less frequently than on a daily basis, no reasonable person would be expected to tolerate them	15
b) Has a completely disproportionate reaction to minor events or to criticism to the extent that the customer has an extreme violent outburst leading to threatening behaviour or actual physical violence	15
c) Has unpredictable outbursts of aggressive, disinhibited or bizarre behaviour, sufficient in severity and frequency to cause disruption for the majority of the time	9
d) Has a strongly disproportionate reaction to minor events or to criticism, to the extent that the customer cannot manage overall day to day life when such events or criticism occur	9
e) Has unpredictable outbursts of aggressive, disinhibited or bizarre behaviour, sufficient to cause frequent disruption	6
f) Frequently demonstrates a moderately disproportionate reaction to minor events or to criticism but not to such an extent that the customer cannot manage overall day to day life when such events or criticism occur	6
g) None of the above apply	0

## 21. Dealing with other people

Descriptors	Points
a) Is unaware of impact of own behaviour to the extent that: (i) has difficulty relating to others even for brief periods, such as a few hours; or (ii) causes distress to others on a daily basis	15
b) The customer misinterprets verbal or non-verbal communication to the extent of causing himself or herself significant distress on a daily basis	15
c) Is unaware of impact of own behaviour to the extent that: (i) has difficulty relating to others for longer periods, such as a day or two; or (ii) causes distress to others for the majority of the time	9
d) The customer misinterprets verbal or non-verbal communication to the extent of causing himself or herself significant distress to himself for the majority of the time	9
e) Is unaware of impact of own behaviour to the extent that: (i) has difficulty relating to others for prolonged periods, such as a week; or (ii) frequently causes distress to others	6

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|---|---|
| f) The customer misinterprets verbal or non-verbal communication to the extent of causing himself or herself significant distress on a frequent basis | 6 |
| g) None of the above apply  | 0 |

## **Limited Capability for Work-Related Activity**

### **Descriptors for each activity**

#### **1. Walking or moving on level ground**

##### **Descriptor**

Cannot a: walk (with a walking stick or other aid if such aid is normally used)  
b: move (with the aid of crutches if crutches are normally used); or  
c: manually propel the customer's wheelchair  
more than 30 metres without repeatedly stopping, experiencing breathlessness or severe discomfort

#### **2. Rising from sitting and transferring from one seated position to another**

##### **Descriptor**

Cannot complete both of the following  
a: rise to standing from sitting in an upright chair without receiving physical assistance from someone else; and  
b: move between one seated position and another seated position located next to one another without receiving physical assistance from someone else

#### **3. Picking up and moving or transferring by the use of the upper body and arms (excluding standing, sitting, bending or kneeling and all other activities specified)**

##### **Descriptor**

Cannot pick up and move 0.5 litre carton full of liquid with either hand

#### **4. Reaching**

##### **Descriptor**

Cannot raise either arm as if to put something in the top pocket of a coat or jacket

#### **5. Manual dexterity**

##### **Descriptor**

Cannot a: turn a "star-headed" sink tap with either hand; or  
b: pick up a £1 coin or equivalent with either hand

#### **6. Continence**

##### **Descriptor**

(a) Continence other than enuresis (bed wetting) where the customer does not have an artificial stoma or urinary collecting device.

- a: Has no voluntary control over the evacuation of the bowel;
- b: Has no voluntary control over the voiding of the bladder;

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- c: At least once a week, loses control of bowels so that the customer cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel;
  - d: At least once a week, loses control of bladder so that the customer cannot control the full voiding of the bladder;
  - e: At least once a week, fails to control full evacuation of the bowel, owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour; or
  - f: At least once a week, fails to control full-voiding of the bladder, owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour.
- (b) Continence where the customer uses a urinary collecting device, worn for the majority of the time including an indwelling urethral or suprapubic catheter.
- a: Is unable to affix, remove or empty the catheter bag or other collecting device without receiving physical assistance from another person;
  - b: Is unable to affix, remove or empty the catheter bag or other collecting device without causing leakage of contents;
  - c: Has no voluntary control over the evacuation of the bowel;
  - d: At least once a week loses control of bowels so that the customer cannot control the full evacuation of the bowel; or
  - e: At least once a week, fails to control full evacuation of the bowel, owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour.
- (c) Continence other than enuresis (bed wetting) where the customer has an artificial stoma appliance.
- a: Is unable to affix, remove or empty stoma appliance without receiving physical assistance from another person;
  - b: Is unable to affix, remove or empty stoma without causing leakage of contents;
  - c: Where the customer's artificial stoma relates solely to the evacuation of the bowel, has no voluntary control over voiding of bladder;
  - d: Where the customer's artificial stoma relates solely to the evacuation of the bowel, at least once a week, loses control of the bladder so that the customer cannot control the full voiding of the bladder; or
  - e: Where the customer's artificial stoma relates solely to the evacuation of the bowel, at least once a week, fails to control the full voiding of the bladder, owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour.

## **7. Maintaining personal hygiene**

### **Descriptor**

- a: Cannot wash the front of their body without receiving physical assistance from someone else;
- b: Cannot wash the front of their body without repeatedly stopping, experiencing breathlessness or severe discomfort;
- c: Cannot wash the front of their body without receiving regular prompting given by someone else in the customer's presence; or
- d: Owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, fails to wash the front of their own body without receiving—
  - (i) physical assistance from someone else; or
  - (ii) regular prompting given by someone else in the customer's presence.

## 8. Eating and drinking

### Descriptor

#### (a) Conveying food or drink to the mouth

- a: Cannot convey food or drink to the customer's own mouth without receiving physical assistance from someone else;
- b: Cannot convey food or drink to the customer's own mouth without repeatedly stopping, experiencing breathlessness or severe discomfort;
- c: Cannot convey food or drink to the customer's own mouth without receiving regular prompting given by someone else in the customer's physical presence; or
- d: Owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, fails to convey food or drink to the customer's own mouth without receiving—
  - (i) physical assistance from someone else; or
  - (ii) regular prompting given by someone else in the customer's presence.

#### (b) Chewing or swallowing food or drink

- a: Cannot chew or swallow food or drink;
- b: Cannot chew or swallow food or drink without repeatedly stopping, experiencing breathlessness or severe discomfort;
- c: Cannot chew or swallow food or drink without repeatedly receiving regular prompting given by someone else in the customer's presence; or
- d: Owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour, fails to—
  - (i) chew or swallow food or drink; or
  - (ii) chew or swallow food or drink without regular prompting given by someone else in the customer's presence.

## 9. Learning or comprehension in the completion of tasks

### Descriptor

- a: Cannot learn or understand how to successfully complete a simple task, such as the preparation of a hot drink, at all;
- b: Needs to witness a demonstration, given more than once on the same occasion of how to carry out a simple task before the customer is able to learn or understand how to complete the task successfully, but would be unable to successfully complete the task the following day without receiving a further demonstration of how to complete it; or
- c: Fails to do any of the matters referred to in (a) or (b) owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour

## 10. Personal action

### Descriptor

- a: Cannot initiate or sustain any personal action (which means planning, organisation, problem solving, prioritising or switching tasks);
- b: Cannot initiate or sustain personal action without requiring daily verbal prompting given by someone else in the customer's presence; or

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c: Fails to initiate or sustain basic personal action without requiring daily verbal prompting given by someone else in the customer's presence, owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour.

## 11. Communication

### Descriptor

a: None of the following forms of communication can be achieved by the customer—

- (i) speaking (to a standard that may be understood by strangers);
- (ii) writing (to a standard that may be understood by strangers);
- (iii) typing (to a standard that may be understood by strangers);
- (iv) sign language to a standard equivalent to Level 3 British Sign Language;

b: None of the forms of communication referred to in (a) are achieved by the customer, owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour;

c: Misinterprets verbal or non-verbal communication to the extent of causing distress to himself or herself on a daily basis; or

d: Effectively cannot make himself or herself understood to others because of the customer's disassociation from reality owing to a severe disorder of mood or behaviour.

**Further information**

If the customer has any problems to do with Employment and Support Allowance they must get in touch with Jobcentre Plus. They will find the phone number in the business pages of the phone book.

Remember that this information is a guide only. It is not meant to say exactly what the customer's legal rights are. While we have tried to make sure that the information is correct, it is possible that there may be incorrect information or some items may be oversimplified. Also, please remember that the information is likely to become less accurate over time, for example because of changes to the law.

[www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk)

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