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Policy paper

Spring Budget 2023 factsheet – Disability White Paper

Published 15 March 2023

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Summary of changes announced in the Health and Disability White Paper

- The White Paper sets out ambitious and extensive reforms so more disabled people and people with health conditions live the independent and fulfilling lives they deserve.
- Landmark reforms to the benefits system will change the emphasis from what people can't do, to what they can, by legislating to remove the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) so that in future there is only one health and disability assessment – the Personal Independent Payment (PIP) assessment.
- This will mean there will be no need to be found to have limited capability for work and limited capability to prepare for work to get additional income-related support for a disability or health condition – reducing the worry claimants currently experience that they will lose their benefits following a reassessment.
- We will replace the current Universal Credit Limited Capability for Work and Work Related Activity (LCWRA) financial top up with a new UC health element. This will be awarded to people who are receiving the UC standard allowance and any PIP element. The award rate of the new UC health element will be set equal to the current award to those people that have LCWRA, ensuring there is a safety net in place for the most vulnerable.
- We are investing in employment support for disabled people and people with health conditions. We are stepping up our Work Coach support across the country, with disabled people and those with health conditions now having additional time with a work coach in Jobcentres. We are also extending the Work and Health Programme to September 2024 and rolling-out our new In-Work Progression Offer to help people in work on Universal Credit, including disabled people, to increase their earnings and move into better-paid jobs.

What is the White Paper?

- Transforming Future Support: The Health and Disability White Paper sets out our ambitious reforms to help more disabled people and people with health conditions to start, stay and succeed in work and have a better experience of the benefits system. It is informed by feedback on Shaping Future Support: The Health and Disability Green Paper.
- During the Green Paper consultation, we heard from more than 4,500 people and organisations on what proposals we should take forward. From the responses, we know many disabled people want to work and could work, with the right support. We also know that disabled people are more likely to stop working and, once out of work, less likely to return. The White Paper sets out the policies to reform the system and implement changes that need to be made to help disabled people access work opportunities.

How will removing the Work Capability Assessment and replacing the current Universal Credit Limited Capability for Work and Work Related Activity (LCWRA) element work?

- Removing the WCA will reduce the number of assessments people claiming both PIP and UC need to take to access their benefits and enable us to provide more personalised levels of support in a new system. We want to introduce a more tailored approach, to allow Work Coaches to build a relationship with an individual and determine what, if any, work-related activities an individual can participate in.
- By removing the Work Capability Assessment, we will ensure that those who are able to can progress in or towards work, without the worry of being reassessed and losing their benefits.
- Replacing the current UC Limited Capability for Work and Work Related Activity (LCWRA) element with a new UC health element will remove barriers in the system that can prevent people who would like to, from entering or remaining in employment.

How will the new Universal Credit health element work?

- The new UC health element will be awarded to people who are receiving the UC standard allowance and any PIP element. In effect PIP will therefore act as a passporting benefit for this new UC health element.
- We will set the award rate of the new UC health element at the same level as is currently awarded to those people determined to have Limited Capability for Work and Work Related Activity (LCWRA).
- This will abolish the need to be found to have limited capability for work to access additional means-tested support and remove this barrier to work. We will therefore get rid of the categories “limited capability for work and work related activity” and “limited capability for work”.
- Any LCWRA recipients that move to the new system who do not receive PIP will receive transitional cash protection so no one experiences financial loss at the point at which the reform is enacted.

When will the changes to the benefit system come into effect?

- We will take time to carefully consider how best to implement these changes and give security and certainty to claimants.

- Our proposals to transform the benefits system by removing the Work Capability Assessment and introducing a new Universal Credit health element will require primary legislation, which we will aim to take early in a new Parliament, when Parliamentary time allows.

What additional employment support are you providing?

- We are expanding Work Coach support across the country by providing more dedicated time nationally for Universal Credit and Employment and Support Allowance claimants with health conditions who could benefit from support or would like further help to move closer to or into work. This support is already available in 1/3 of Jobcentres enabling Work Coaches to deliver more personalised support and better direct disabled people and those with health conditions to employment programmes, wider skills support and schemes to help them overcome barriers to employment. It will be available in approximately a further third of Jobcentres from spring 2023 (228 more Jobcentres across 13 districts), then nationally in 2024.
- We are extending the Work and Health Programme to September 2024 to provide more specialist employment support to disabled people and disadvantaged groups. The programme helps those who expect to find work within 12 months and will provide additional support for around 100,000 people, we expect most of these will be disabled people.
- We are extending the support Jobcentres provide to people in work and on Universal Credit to help them to increase their earnings and move into better-paid jobs via the new In-Work Progression Offer. Since April 2022, we have been rolling-out a new voluntary progression offer, available to working Universal Credit claimants including disabled people and people with physical and/or mental health conditions to ensure they can access support to move into higher-paid work. This will be provided by Work Coaches and will focus on removing barriers to progression and providing help to put together a tailored progression plan. This may include considering skills gaps, identifying training opportunities or looking at opportunities for the person to progress in their current role or supporting them to move into a new role.

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