



Department for
Work & Pensions

The Rt Hon Mel Stride MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

4th Floor
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9DA

22nd November 2023

Dear Stephen,

Work Capability Assessment Consultation Response

I am writing to inform you that the UK government has now published its response to the consultation on changes to the Work Capability Assessment (WCA), which I wrote to you about on 5th September 2023.

Today, my department has published its response to the consultation on changes to the Work Capability Assessment to reflect the modern world of work and greater employment opportunities for disabled people and people with health conditions.

Through a new 'Chance to Work Guarantee', we will effectively abolish the Work Capability Assessment for most existing claimants who are not expected to look for or prepare for work. This will remove the fear of re-assessments and give people the confidence to try work, while providing continuity of service for vulnerable claimants.

This brings forward a key part of our reforms announced earlier this year in "*Transforming Support: The Health and Disability White Paper*", which sets out our future direction to completely abolish the Work Capability Assessment and introduce a new personalised, tailored approach to employment support.

Ahead of these longer-term plans, we need to ensure the Work Capability Assessment delivers the right outcomes, and reflects changes in work since the WCA activities and descriptors were last comprehensively reviewed in 2011.

Over this time, the labour market has changed significantly, as evidenced by the increase in flexibility, and the availability of hybrid and home working jobs. At the same time, the proportion of people assessed to be entitled to the highest tier of health-related benefits, without any requirement to look or prepare for work, has risen from 21% in 2011 to 65% in 2022. And yet we know that one in five people who are not expected to engage in work preparation would like to work at some point in the future if the right job and support were available.

To help inform our decisions on how we intend to take forward changes to the Work Capability Assessment, we have carefully considered all the consultation responses and feedback from our public events and engagement. We received 1,348 written responses from disabled people and people with health conditions, as well as the organisations that represent and support them. We also engaged directly with clinical experts, employer groups and disability organisations across the country.

To reflect new flexibilities in the labour market and to ensure more people are supported to move closer to work, from 2025, we will:

- remove the 'Mobilising' activity used to assess 'Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity';
- reduce the points awarded for the 'Getting About' descriptor used to assess 'Limited Capability for Work';
- ensure the criteria used to determine a substantial risk to health of a claimant found capable of work-related activity is used only in exceptional circumstances so it is in line with the original policy intention.

We will continue to protect the most vulnerable and those who have the most significant limitations. We have determined not to make any changes to the Contingence or Social Engagement activities.

We will also change how we describe our health benefit groups in future. We will no longer refer to people's limitations and will instead focus on what they can do. From 2025, the term 'Work Preparation' will replace 'Limited Capability for Work', and 'Health Group' will replace 'Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity'.

Alongside these measures, the Government's recently announced Back to Work Plan will help more disabled people and those with a long-term illness to overcome barriers to work. This includes through our new WorkWell service bringing together work and health support locally and an expansion of Universal Support to place more people in roles and provide ongoing wraparound help.

By making these changes, we will ensure fairness for both claimants and taxpayers, step up the support on offer to the most vulnerable claimants, and tear down barriers to work.

The consultation response is available via this link:

I welcome the committee's constructive engagement on these matters.

With best wishes,



THE RT HON MEL STRIDE MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WORK AND PENSIONS