



# Hear Us

## Croydon's Mental Health Service User Group

To promote, educate, communicate and empower,  
For the benefit and interest of people affected by mental  
health issues

# YOUR BENEFITS ARE CHANGING DON'T PANIC!

- Over the next 3 years **EVERYONE** who is on a **Sickness Benefit** (including **Income Support** due to incapacity, **Incapacity Benefit** or **Severe Disablement Allowance**) will be moved or 'migrated' onto **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**
- **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)** is a benefit paid to people who are not well enough to work or have limited ability to work because of illness or disability
- The government has decided that **ESA** is better suited to supporting those people who can work to get back to work, while continuing to provide for those people who can't work.
- It has been shown that people who get advice and help with their **ESA** assessments and/or appeal a decision if they are not happy with it, are more likely to be successful in their claim for **ESA**. So, the advice is, **DON'T PANIC**.
- **Hear Us** has worked with **Welfare Benefits Department (SLaM)** to condense the migration process into **7 easy-to-follow steps**, so that service users will know what to expect when 'their time comes' to be assessed for **ESA**, and most importantly when and how to get help.

# 7 Stages of Migration from Income Support (IS) and Incapacity Benefit (IB) onto Employment Support Allowance (ESA)

(see pages 4 - 7 for details about how to get support & advice at each step)

## 1 INITIAL CONTACT

You will receive a letter from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) stating you are being 'migrated' from your current benefit (IS/IB) onto ESA

**STOP**  
Read  
Page 4  
Step 1

## 2 ASSESSMENT

In the following weeks you will be sent a form to fill out called an ESA50 (Limited Capability for Work questionnaire).

**STOP**  
Read  
Page 4  
Step 2

## 3 INFORMATION

Submit as much 'supporting information' as you can along with the ESA50 form. People may be found 'fit for work' based on the information provided at this stage.

**STOP**  
Read  
Page 5  
Step 3



# 4

## **MEDICAL**

Most people will be called for a medical as part of their assessment as well as filling out the ESA50 form

**STOP  
Read  
Page 5  
Step 4**

# 5

## **DECISION**

All the information is sent to the DWP who make the decision about whether or not you will be awarded ESA

# 6

## **NOTIFICATION**

You will receive notification of the DWP's decision by letter (see page 5 for possible outcomes)

# 7

## **APPEAL**

As soon as you receive the decision from the DWP if you are not happy **APPEAL**

**STOP  
Read  
Page 6  
Step 7**



## STEP 1 - INITIAL CONTACT WHAT ADVICE SHOULD I GET?

If you ARE with a CMHT (Community Mental Health Team)

And attend:

Tamworth Road CMHT: Tel: 020 3228 0300/0301/0302

Westways CMHT: Tel: 020 3228 5800

Crescent CMHT: Tel: 01689 308 400

Purley CMHT: Tel: 020 3228 5400

Most CMHT's hold 'surgeries' with welfare benefit advisors once a month so ask for an appointment by calling the telephone number of your CMHT (see above)

In-patients can see the welfare advisors at the Maudsley or Bethlem hospital

Tel: 020 3228 2942

If you're NOT with a CMHT (Community Mental Health Team)

Croydon Welfare rights Advice Line:

Tel: 0800 731 5920

Mind in Croydon Benefits & Advocacy advice

Tel: 020 8763 2037 or 020 8763 6730

Citizens Advice Bureau:

Tel: 020 8684 2236 (Thornton Heath) or



## STEP 2 - ASSESSMENT WHAT ADVICE SHOULD I GET?

No one is exempt from assessment but it is worth asking your GP and/or mental health professional to send 'supporting information' to the DWP at this stage (see step 3), as well as seeking advice to help you with the form by calling one of the telephone numbers above.

### NOTES

**The ESA 113 form** CAN be sent by ATOS to someone's doctor. If it is completed well it can prevent someone having to complete an ESA50 or have a medical and get them straight onto ESA

**ATOS** – The company carrying out the medical assessments.



### STEP 3 - INFORMATION WHAT ADVICE SHOULD I GET

Supporting Information could include:

- a letter from your GP stating why they feel that a return to work at this stage could be detrimental to your mental health.
- a letter from your care coordinator or psychiatrist or other member of your care team stating the difficulties you have with regards to your mental health and the potential problems you would have if you had to return to work at this stage.
- if you are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, you could submit this also, stating what level you receive and why you need this extra support in your daily living.



### STEP 4 - MEDICAL WHAT ADVICE SHOULD I GET?

- It is worth talking to a professional about what to expect at a medical (calling the telephone numbers in Step 1)
- The website 'benefits and work' also provides lots of 'tips' and advice on attending medical: Visit: [www.benefitsandwork.co.uk](http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk)
- It is advisable to take someone along with you to your medical, e.g. a friend, family, carer or professional such as your care coordinator.

### STEPS 5 & 6 - DECISION AND NOTIFICATION

After the DWP has received all the information that they need about you they will decide whether or not to award you Employment and Support Allowance  
There are 3 possible outcomes they could reach:

- You are found fit for work i.e. not awarded ESA - (you must then apply for Job Seekers Allowance) or
- You are awarded ESA and placed in the Support Group (you will receive £65.45+ £31.40) or
- You are awarded ESA and placed in the Work Related Activity Group (you will receive £65.40 + £25.95)

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Support Group = People placed in the Support group of ESA will not be expected to make any steps towards finding work or doing any work related activity *unless they want to*.

WRA Group = People placed in the Work Related Activity group will be expected to attend 'interviews' to discuss their goals and the support that they would need to help them make steps towards work or work related activities (such as training courses)

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## STEP 7 - APPEAL

### WHAT ADVICE SHOULD I GET?

A. ask for a **Reconsideration** IMMEDIATELY by phoning the DWP (this means that your claim is looked at 'in house' by a different assessor and this may avoid the need to go through a lengthy appeal process) It is also a good idea to write to the DWP and say you want a reconsideration because, e.g. you feel that you are too unwell to work and have been unwell for years, and that a return to work could be detrimental to your mental health. This is only an example, Seek advice from a member of your care team etc (see above) at this stage.

B. **Appeal.** Phone the DWP IMMEDIATELY and tell them that you intend to appeal. It is also a good idea to put this in writing. You have 28 days to appeal their decision. Both by phone and in writing giving a brief reason as to why you are appealing their decision and let them know you are gathering more information, e.g. "I am appealing against your decision not to award me ESA because I am too unwell too work and have been unwell for years and a return to work would be detrimental to my mental health"

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### NOTES:

- You will be paid a reduced rate of benefit while your claim is on appeal, but you should receive back pay if you win.
- Currently, about 40% of claimants who are turned down for ESA are 'winning' their appeals
- Disability Living Allowance is NOT affected by the migration

# Useful Contact Numbers For Benefit Enquiries & Support

<b>Community Mental Health Teams</b>	
Tamworth Road	020 3228 0300
Crescent	01689 308 400
Purley Resource Centre	020 3228 5400
Westways Resource Centre	020 3228 5800
<b>Mind in Croydon Welfare Benefits Advice</b>	<b>020 8763 2037/6730</b>
<b>Croydon's Benefits Advice line</b>	<b>0800 731 5920</b>
<b>Citizens Advice Bureau:</b>	
(Thornton Heath)	020 8684 2236
(New Addington branch)	01689 846 890
<b>For Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance call The Disability Benefits Helpline (Part of the DWP)</b>	<b>08457 123 456</b>
<b>For Income Support, Incapacity Benefit &amp; Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) call Jobcentre Plus (Part of the DWP)</b>	<b>0800 055 6688</b>
<b>For Council Tax Enquiries</b>	<b>020 872 7000 option 1</b>
<b>For Housing Benefit Enquiries</b>	<b>020 872 7000 option 2</b>
<b>Croydon's Benefits advice line</b>	<b>0800 731 5920</b>
<b>Carer's Allowance</b>	<b>0845 608 4321</b>
<b>Help with health costs - find out if you are entitled to free prescriptions etc</b>	<b>0845 850 1166</b>
<b>Croydon Employment Support Service (CESS) Welfare and Benefits Advice</b>	<b>020 8255 5473</b>

# Hear Us Membership Application Form

Resident in London Borough of Croydon	
Have a recognisable interest in mental health service user issues in Croydon	
Have had emotional psychological problems or some form of mental illness	

Name:			
Address:			
Tel:			
Email:			
Gender:		Ethnicity	
Age & DOB:			

Which resource centre (if any) do you attend?	
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Hear Us will not use the information you provide for anything other than distribution of newsletters and invitations to meetings.

I would like to become a member of Hear Us, and to receive your free newsletter. I agree to the group's rules.

Please read the form thoroughly and check that the information you have provided is correct before signing.

Signature: