



Employment and Support Allowance Factsheet

June 2017

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) is a benefit paid to people whose ability to work is limited either by ill health or disability. To qualify you must be under state pension age and no longer have any entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay. ESA has two elements: contributory ESA (based on your National Insurance contributions) and income related ESA (means tested). You may be able to get either or both depending on your NI contribution record and your income and capital. Income related ESA is being replaced by Universal Credit. Universal Credit is being introduced gradually so your location in the UK along with your household composition will determine whether you need to apply for it instead of income related ESA.

Benefit rates

With a diagnosis of a terminal illness, such as Mesothelioma, you will automatically be placed in the “support group” and receive the main phase ESA rate along with the “support component”. Benefit rates are reviewed each year, normally in April. Information regarding current figures can be found at www.gov.uk or contact the Mesothelioma UK National Welfare Benefits Adviser (see below). In the “support group” you will not have to undertake work related activities and your ESA award will continue for as long as you are in the “support group” and will not be limited to 12 months.

Can I claim ESA if I am self employed?

If you are self employed, below state retirement age and are unable to work due to your Mesothelioma then you can claim ESA as long as you have paid the correct level of National Insurance contributions. If you have not paid the relevant contributions then you may qualify for income related ESA depending upon your household income and savings.

How to claim

You can start your claim for ESA by contacting the Jobcentre Plus claim line on **0800 055 6688** (Northern Ireland **0800 085 6318**). You will be asked for medical confirmation of your illness but will not have to submit medical certificates on a regular basis. If your GP, consultant or specialist nurse has given you a DS1500 form then this should be forwarded to the Department for Work and Pensions straight away so that they can process your application under the “special rules”.

Further help

The information regarding ESA has been summarised for the purposes of this Factsheet as the rules surrounding this benefit can be complex. For help to check benefit entitlement, assistance with form filling or to discuss any problems with benefit/compensation applications please contact the Mesothelioma UK National Welfare Benefits Adviser on **0800 169 2409** or email info@mesothelioma.uk.com Alternatively, you can contact an Asbestos Support Group or your local Citizens Advice office.

