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Free Benefits Newsletter

for professionals

Cuts to ESA(c)

The date of two planned cuts to Employment and Support Allowance (contributory) has been announced by the DWP. From Spring 2012, ESA in youth will be abolished and Employment and Support Allowance (contributory) will generally be time limited to 12 months (except for those in the support group). Depending on the means test, some clients would then be able to claim Employment and Support Allowance (income related). Starting on 19 September 2011 and running over a 4 week period, the DWP will write to all claimants receiving Employment and Support Allowance (contributory) to advise them that their contribution-based benefit may be limited to 12 months.

See our [ESA Course](#) and [Benefit Change and Welfare Reform Course](#) for training.

GPs and Work Issues

A [DWP report](#) about General Practitioners' attitudes towards patients' health and work makes interesting reading. Key points are-

- 'Almost all (99%) of GPs thought that work was beneficial for health and that helping patients to stay in or return to work was an important part of the GPs role. 96% agreed that worklessness is generally detrimental to people's health.
- The majority of GPs reported positive impacts of the 'fit note' on the quality of consultations and outcomes for patients.
- Respondents were evenly split on whether the introduction of the fit note had lengthened consultation times.
- The majority of GPs reported an absence of good services locally to which they could refer patients for support or advice about return to work.
- A minority of GPs reported that they had received training in work and health within the past 12 months.'

See our [ESA Course](#) and [Intro to Benefits Course](#) for training.

Clients and Work Issues

A separate [DWP report](#) looks at attitudes to health and work amongst the working-age population. Key points are-

- 'Just over 80% of respondents both in and not in employment believed work is good for both physical and mental health.
- The vast majority (91 per cent) of respondents said that they would go to work with a short term condition but significantly fewer (around 60 per cent) said they would go into work if they suffered from long-term physical and mental health conditions. Respondents who were in employment were likely to say they would go to work under all the hypothetical scenarios posed in comparison with those not in employment.
- 79% of respondents reported they went into work in the last 12 months despite feeling quite unwell. The top three reasons why were non-financial: "I was too busy at work", "I wasn't ill enough" and "I thought I would feel better if I went into work".'

Challenge to HB Reform

The Child Poverty Action Group have challenged two parts of the Housing Benefit Reforms introduced in April 2011 in the High Court-

- The introduction of absolute caps of Local Housing Allowances for each size of property .
- Removal of the 5 bedroom rate of Local Housing Allowances.

Two grounds for challenge have been used–

- Housing Benefit was 'meant to be a national scheme to prevent homelessness... And a large area of central London would no longer be accessible to housing benefit claimants in the private rented sector'.
- 'It is likely that black and minority ethnic groups and lone parents will be disproportionately hit by both cuts.'

HB Processing Times

In 2010/11 the average number of days to process Housing Benefit new claims were 23 days. The average time to process a change of circumstance was 10 days. To access the times for your local authority [click here](#) and the use the 'additional tables' link.

See our [Housing Benefit course](#) for training.

Course Helps Clients Back to Work



"The programme delivered by Social Welfare Training was just what I needed to give my Employment Services Team an overview of the benefits system. I was also pleased that the programme could be tailored to our individual needs, including case studies and group tasks which facilitated discussions that focussed on real issues affecting us as an Employment Support Provider. The course delivery and content was excellent, I would recommend."

James Bird– Head of Employment Services, Linkage Community Trust

This 2 day in-house course concentrated on the effect of work on Benefits for disabled clients, particularly those with a learning disability.

[email us](#) or call 0117 8514 337 to discuss how we can help you with your in-house training. We offer a **10% discount** if you book 3 or more in-house courses.

This Newsletter

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