

Changes to the Benefits System

What is the role of your GP?

Many of our patients are currently having their entitlement to benefit looked at and these changes, including the new "bedroom tax" and ESA are causing worry for many people and their families.

There are a number of leaflets available from the Jobcentre and the Tribunal Service which explain how to make a claim for benefit and how to appeal if your benefit has been turned down.

How can you get your information across?

Complete your initial claim forms as fully as possible explaining how your mobility and everyday activities are affected.

Appeals are much more likely to succeed if you attend in person as this allows you to talk to the panel and to describe your difficulties in detail.

If you are appealing a decision, consider seeking advice from other agencies such as Welfare Rights, Housing Associations, Citizens Advice Bureau.

What can your Doctor Do?

If the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) requires information about you, **they will write to the practice** requesting details of your medical conditions and management. **Your GP will provide and send this back directly to the DWP.**

If you appeal and the Tribunal Service feels that further medical information is necessary **they will write to your GP** requesting a report or copy of your records. **It is not necessary for you to ask directly for a letter from your GP to appeal against a DWP decision**

The DWP decision is based upon how your illnesses affect you, your daily life and your ability to work, rather than a list of diagnoses. However, if you want a copy of your medication and main diagnosis, your surgery reception can provide a summary sheet or copy of your repeat prescription for you to refer to when completing your forms. **You do not need to book a GP appointment to get this.**